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DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN BULGARIA

Methodology for Monitoring Policy and Institutional Practice

PULSE Foundation

CSD CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

MENNESKERETTIGHETS AKADEMIET
HUMAN RIGHTS ACADEMY

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CSD ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ИЗСЛЕДВАНЕ НА ДЕМОКРАЦИЯТА

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This publication is an analysis of the practical application, implementation, and evaluation of concrete legal, strategic, and policy measures set to counter the phenomenon of gender-based and domestic violence in Bulgaria. Consequently, it shows how data, statistics and insights collected with respect to these types of violence could be interpreted and put into context. Ultimately, the methodology is intended to serve as a useful tool for experts, helping them identify and define acute challenges, key areas for improvement, as well as existing best practices.

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We hope that the efforts and the dedication put into this publication will be of help to those who need it the most – the victims of domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria.

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List of Abbreviations

APIA	Access to Public Information Act
BHC	Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
CPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CSD	Center for the Study of Democracy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGBV	Domestic and gender-based violence
DV	Domestic violence
ECtHR	European Court on Human Rights
EIGE	European Institute of Gender Equality
EU	European Union
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GBV	Gender-based violence
IPV	Intimate partner violence
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDVA	Protection against Domestic Violence Act
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence against women

Executive Summary

The Methodology for Monitoring Policy and Institutional Practice in Relation to Domestic and Gender-based violence in Bulgaria is an innovative monitoring and evaluation tool, designed for the recurrent (desirably, annual) observation and assessment of the objective situation, key stakeholders' perceptions and opinions, and new developments in this area. The Methodology has three interrelated goals, namely: (1) the identification and practical evaluation of legal, policy and strategic documents, as they are implemented by relevant institutional and non-governmental agents, (2) the gathering and contextualisation of available quantitative statistics and qualitative data in relation to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria, and (3) the enabling of identification and addressing of problematic areas, issues and challenges in need of decisive policy response.

The design of the Methodology is built upon established approaches such as gender-mainstreaming and victim-sensitivity, and good practices in the area of monitoring human rights compliance, women's rights, non-discrimination, and substantive equality that are incorporated in foundational human rights instruments such as the Convention for the elimination of all types of discrimination against women (1979) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011). From the definitions in Chapter 3, to the thematic categorisation in Chapter 4, this instrument follows and fosters a holistic approach to preventing and combatting violence on the basis of gender, specifically focusing on its most prevalent form – intimate partner violence against women. Through this holistic approach, the indicator-based structuring of the monitoring tool enables the drawing of impactful insights in seven primary thematic areas (*General legislative and policy measures, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and punishment, Reparations, Coordination, monitoring and data collection, and International cooperation*) and three supplementary areas of interest (*Discrimination, Intersectional vulnerabilities, and New types of violence*).

The Methodology additionally contains guidelines on data collection (Chapter 5), and analysis (Chapter 6) for the purposes of producing a monitoring report and policy recommendations. It proposes a mixed methods approach to collecting data, accounting for the current absence of comprehensive statistics on domestic and gender-based violence nationally, and acknowledging the crucial importance of assessing how stakeholders understand, think about, and implement the legal, policy, and institutional framework. Further, it supports an immersive parallel method of data analysis, capable of contextualising quantitative data through qualitative data, thus allowing a more comprehensive and deeper evaluation of domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria in all of its aspects. Finally, the Methodology includes a set of practical materials (interviews' and focus groups' guides, data request template, informed consent form template, and lists of relevant stakeholders and information sources) for the benefit of future implementers of the tool, both researchers, and governmental officials.

1. Purpose and Specific Objectives of the Monitoring Methodology

The present monitoring methodology is envisioned as a tool to observe and assess legal instruments, policies and institutional practices related to domestic and gender-based violence (DGBV)[1] in Bulgaria. Thus, it conforms to the monitoring and evaluation processes' primary aim, which is to "provide the main parties with timely information about the progress, or lack thereof, in the production of outputs and the achievement of outcomes" (UNDP, 2003, p. 18). The results of the monitoring are intended to facilitate decision-making, inform necessary and innovative measures and, more generally, lead to the improvement of existing policies and practices and/or the inception and implementation of new ones.

The monitoring methodology has three interrelated objectives::

- To demonstrate what concrete legal, strategic, and policy measures are in place to counter the phenomenon of DGBV, and more specifically Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Bulgaria and to explore if and how these measures are being put into practice, implemented and evaluated;
- From this, to present, put into context, and attempt to interpret data and statistics, which are being collected with respect to IPV;
- To identify, delineate and describe clearly existing challenges and those key areas for improvement where additional legislative, strategic, and policy efforts are needed.

1 This methodology was elaborated within the framework of the initiative *Development of a monitoring methodology and conducting a national monitoring of policy and institutional practice in relation to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria* (2019-2022). Funded by the Active Citizens Fund (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein Grants), it was implemented by "Positive Personal Skills in Society" Foundation (Bulgaria, Coordinator) and Center for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria, Partner) and the Human Rights Academy (Norway, Partner) during the period of 2019-2022. Although the authors developed this methodology within the above-mentioned project, their objective is to produce a document that can be reviewed, revised, and utilized after the project's end. You can find more information in Appendix IX to this publication.

2. Design and Beneficiaries of the Methodology

The complex nature of DGBV dictates placing an individual's experience, knowledge, perceptions, and interpretation of various phenomena and occurrences at the centre of monitoring and analytical methods. This is valid for both the experiences of victims (in terms of support and protection) and of perpetrators (in terms of prevention and rehabilitation), as well as for the expert opinions and judgments provided by those who devise, implement, or monitor counter-DGBV strategies, actions, and policies. The methodology's design is also inspired by the centrality of the victim-centred approach[2] to addressing DGBV and the importance attributed to interdisciplinarity and multiagency cooperation for boosting response to this phenomenon. At the same time, the fact that DGBV is deeply rooted in gendered power structures and bias, concealed as 'traditional values' is also recognised.

With respect to specific programs, monitoring has been defined as "the systematic and continuous process of collecting, analysing, and using information to track a program's progress toward reaching its objectives and to guide management decisions" (GWI, 2017, p. 8). The close observation of a situation "through constant or periodic examination or investigation and documentation of developments", the collection of large quantity of data and the use of standards or norms as reference for objective assessment have been established as indispensable elements of the process (Guzman and Verstappen, 2003, p. 7). Usually, the product of monitoring is a report, which in its essence is an assessment of the situation and grounds for further action (2003, p.7).

Monitoring, especially in the context of human rights, often involves the use of indicators. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has previously defined an indicator as "specific information on the state or condition of an object, event, activity or outcome that can be related to human rights norms and standards; that addresses and reflects human rights principles and concerns; and that can be used to assess and monitor the promotion and implementation of human rights" (OHCHR, 2012, p. 2) As sources of information for the human rights indicators OHCHR utilise, are recognised socioeconomic and other administrative statistics, event-based data on human rights violations, perceptions and opinion surveys, and data based on expert judgements (2012, pp. 10-11). This methodology subscribes to this broad definition of an indicator and its sources.

The methodology's design is based on the comprehensive review of existing monitoring methodologies and systems in the field of violence against women, domestic violence and gender-based violence, applied in other countries or produced by relevant regional and

2 According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (a European Union-initiated body dedicated exclusively to gender equality), "(a) victim-centred approach to intimate partner violence places the rights, needs and concerns of female victims at the centre of any interventions to manage risk". (EIGE, 2021a).

international institutions[3]. Among such organisations are the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Council of Europe (CoE) and United Nations (UN) bodies such as OHCHR, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women or independent experts such as the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The insights shared by Menneskerettighetsakademiet (Human Rights Academy or HRA, Norway) during an exchange of best practices complements this review.

Stemming from these findings, specific indicators and criteria were identified and developed. They are to be utilized to assess outputs and measure outcomes linked to legal instruments, policies and practices for addressing domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria. The indicators and criteria are largely informed by milestone documents produced by the above-mentioned organisations such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its General Recommendations and the European Union (EU) Victims' Rights Directive[4], as well as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), which as of December 2021 is non-binding for Bulgaria. They also draw upon existing or illustrative indicators such as those proposed by OHCHR[5] or those used by the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) to gather data at EU level (EIGE, 2021b). The indicators herein were devised through a process of cross-referencing between what legal, policy and strategic documents, institutional practices, cooperation efforts, data collection, statistics, reporting, monitoring and evaluation currently exist on the national level, and such that are undertaken in other countries, regionally, and globally. In this sense, the indicators set is much wider and more ambitious than the present-day realities in Bulgaria, with the ultimate aim of steering programmatic and legal change into a progressive direction towards substantive gender equality and rights protection for victims of violence.

The immediate beneficiaries of the monitoring methodology are stakeholders who are involved, to a different extent and in a different way, in policy- and decision-making.

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3 Among those: "Human Rights Indicators. A guide to Measurement and Implementation" (OHCHR, 2012); Measuring Human Rights (Landman and Carvalho, 2009); "Monitoring and Protecting the Human Rights of Women, Chapter 28" (OHCHR, 2011a); "Documenting the Implementation of Domestic Violence Laws: A Human Rights Monitoring Methodology" (Advocates for Human Rights, 2011); "Intimate Partner Violence Indicators" (EIGE, 2021b); "A framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women" (UN Women, 2015); *Researching violence against women: a practical guide for researchers and activists* (WHO and PATH 2015); *Compendium of International and National Legal Frameworks on Domestic Violence* (World Bank 2019); "Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results report" (FRA 2014); "Mapping Support Services for Victims of Violence against Women in Line with the Istanbul Convention Standards" (Kelly, 2018); "Integrating Gender into Human Rights Monitoring. Chapter 15" (OHCHR, 2011b); About Monitoring. (CoE, n.d.), etc.

4 Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012, which established minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replaces Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

5 See the following documents: *A Human Rights Based Approach to Data - Leaving No One Behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (OHCHR, 2018) and *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation* (OHCHR, 2012)

Additionally, it could also be used by interested parties who perform periodic analysis and evaluation of national performance in this particular field, or directly work with victims of domestic and gender-based violence, as well as with groups that are vulnerable to such violence. In this sense, the methodology could be used periodically, to help construct a broad-scoped picture of Bulgaria's efforts to design and implement comprehensive and effective laws, policies and practices. Therefore, the methodology has the potential to be regularly reviewed and supplemented to adequately reflect the most recent regional and international instruments and novel practices.

3. Contextualising the Methodology

3.1 General Definitions

Terms such as gender-based violence[6], violence against women, and domestic violence are often used interchangeably. Whilst in some cases this is acceptable, as certain elements and aspects associated with them overlap, in other cases such interchangeable use is inaccurate and might lead to confusion. The latter is a major reason why comprehensive definitions of these phenomena should be formulated at national level in reflection of those developed and accepted internationally. To construct the 'definitions tree' below, we used the glossary offered by EIGE, which attempts to set a hierarchy of the terms and their correlation. Stemming from different international documents, EIGE defines the above-mentioned phenomena as follows:

- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** "Violence directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression, or which affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately" (European Institute for Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus, 2021, gender-based violence entry) /umbrella term/

- **Gender-based violence against women:** "Any form of violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately" (2021, gender-based violence against women entry)/broader term: gender-based violence/

- **Violence against women (VAW):** "Violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women including all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"(2021, violence against women entry) / broader term: gender-based violence, related term: gender-based violence against women/

- **Domestic violence (DV):** "All acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, irrespective of biological or legal

6 Within the Bulgarian context, it is especially important to clarify the definition of the term 'gender,' which was at the heart of the debate surrounding the Istanbul Convention in the country. The issue is well summarised by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences in her "End of Mission Statement" from 21 October 2019. She ponders why the presence, meaning and translation of 'gender' proved to be so problematic in the text of the Istanbul Convention, when it is "well established in Bulgaria's domestic law" (Šimonović, 2019). For example, "[T]he 2016 Equality between Women and Men Act in article 2(3), mentions "equal treatment of women and men and non-discrimination and violence based on gender", and article 2(5) mentions "overcoming stereotypes, based on gender". The Special Rapporteur also notes that 'gender' is already part of the Bulgarian legal framework as it is present in both the EU Victims' Rights Detective and the CEDAW Convention.

family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence as the victim" (2021, domestic violence entry)/broader term: gender-based violence/.

As we can see from the last definition, all types of domestic violence (physical, sexual, psychological or economic) might occur between persons with differing legal or biological ties within a single family unit. This also refers to violence against children (including neglect and mistreatment) – both direct and indirect, when they witness acts of violence. Therefore, with due consideration of the primary objective of this methodology and the need to narrow down the scope further, we also include the following definitions:

- **Intimate partner violence (IPV)**: "Physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence between current or former spouses as well as current or former partners. It constitutes a form of violence which affects women disproportionately and which is therefore distinctly gendered" (2021, intimate partner violence entry)/broader term: gender-based violence, related term: domestic violence/.

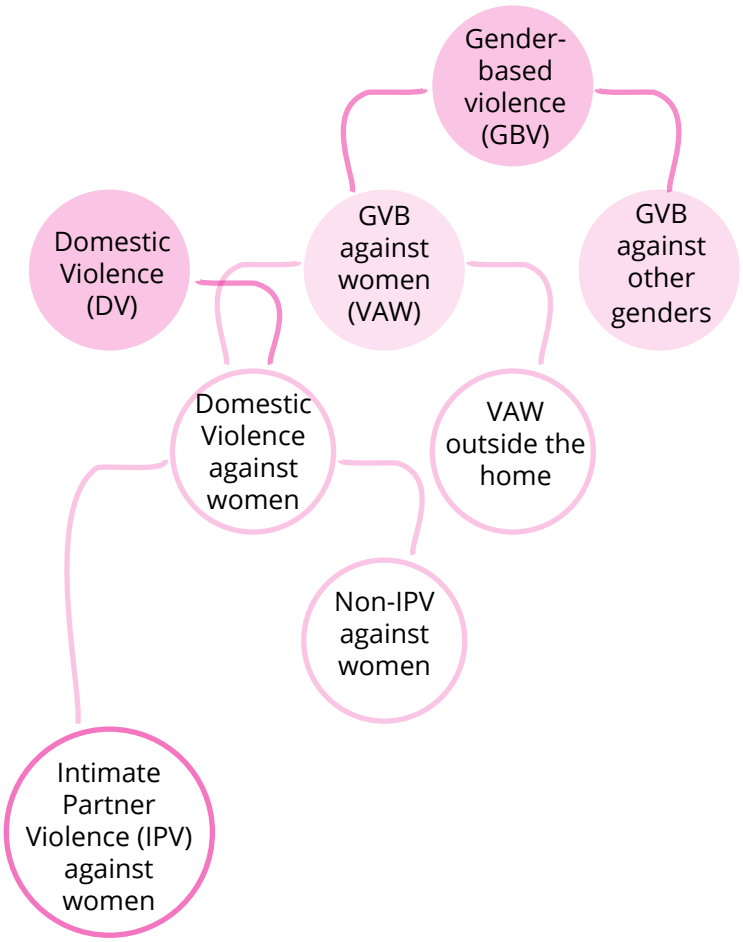
- **Intimate partner**: "current or former partners and spouses whether or not the perpetrator shares or shared the same residence with the victim". (CoE, 2011, p. 3)[7]

An attempt to schematically present the definitions above and the links between them is made below in Figure 1[8].

7 This includes also dating violence, which often affects younger women who are in a romantic/intimate relationship without necessarily living with the abuser.

8 The scheme should be viewed only as exemplary, as it was created for the convenience of those using the methodology. It should not be viewed as definitive and authoritative.

Figure 1. Visual representation of the sub-types of violence, and the focus of this Monitoring methodology – Intimate partner violence (IPV) against women.



Source: Center for the Study of Democracy, 2021

The present methodology concentrates on the phenomenon of intimate partner violence where the victim is a woman and a victim of domestic and/or gender-based violence (DGBV). The term DGBV used hereafter in the Methodology denotes this rendition of the phenomenon: domestic and gender-based violence against women within intimate relations, to the exclusion of all other sub-types. Firstly, this reflects the authors' intent to draw a limit to this methodology and subsequent analysis, thus giving them the necessary focus. Secondly, it echoes two frequently made observations - "most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men" and "the largest burden of intimate partner violence is inflicted by men against their women partners" (EIGE, 2021c). Although in Bulgaria there is no express definition of intimate partner violence, it is a concept practically included in the definition of domestic violence per national legislation (see chapter 2.2 below). In Bulgaria's case, where both quantitative and qualitative state-implemented studies of GBV and its different types are absent, it is only logical to identify as the focal point of analysis exactly IPV, the most common phenomenon within the proposed categorisation.

Finally, we need to include another key definition to be used throughout this methodology:

- **Victim:** "a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence, as well as the family members of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offense and who have suffered harm as a result of that person's death" (*European Institute for Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus, 2021, victim entry*)

Some documents used the term 'survivor' synonymously with 'victim'. Here, we use the term 'victim' to include those who: (i) have survived acts of violence; (ii) were seriously injured and killed because of violence. In addition, we need to define 'high risk groups' as groups of women who have not suffered harm from such type of violence, but are of higher risk than others to be victimized. These might include women with disabilities, women from remote and/or rural communities, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women who have previously refused services (Communities & Justice, 2019), while other groups stand at the intersection of gender and migration status, race/ethnicity, substance abuse, etc. (See Appendix VII on intersectional vulnerability).

3.2 Definitional Context in Bulgaria

Turning to the Bulgarian context, it needs to be specified that only one of the terms present in the scheme above is present in Bulgarian legislation, namely DV. At the time of preparation of this methodology, in Bulgaria there is still no legal definition for GBV or VAW. Article 2 (1) of the Protection against Domestic Violence Act (PDVA, 2009) defines domestic violence as "any act of physical, sexual, mental, emotional or economic violence, as well as attempts of such violence, coercive restriction of personal life, personal liberty and personal rights committed against individuals, who are related, who are or have been in a family relationship or in de-facto conjugal co-habitation."

A 2019 amendment to the Bulgarian Criminal Code (CC, 1968) added domestic violence as an aggravating circumstance for several crimes, such as murder, incitement towards suicide, bodily injury, kidnapping, illegal deprivation of liberty, coercion, threat to commit a crime against someone. Furthermore, a special provision, defined it "as systematic physical, sexual, or mental violence, economic dependence, forceful limitation of personal life, freedom and rights against a relative, (ex-)spouse, person with whom the perpetrator has a child, (ex-) co-habitant or person with whom the perpetrator lives or has lived in the same household" (Ilcheva, 2020, p. 58).

This amendment was adopted to strengthen measures countering violence against women in the aftermath of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court's decision pronouncing the *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe (Istanbul Convention)* unconstitutional. As pointed out in the report of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC), the goal of the amendments was to compensate for the failed ratification of the Convention, but did not address gender-based violence or gender stereotyping, and required the violence to be 'systematic' (BHC, 2019, pp. 120-121). The removal of the problematic term 'systematic' from the description of DV in

the Criminal Code is a key recommendation made by the Bulgarian Ombudsman Diana Kovacheva in April 2020 to the Ministry of Justice (Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2020). This recommendation is among the proposed amendments to PDVA and its related acts, along with the need for clear definitions of psychological violence, economic violence or de-facto conjugal co-habitation (Council of Ministers, 2021). The draft definition of the latter is: "voluntary co-habitation of two adult individuals between whom there are no ties of kinship, presenting an obstacle to marriage, and where the adults take care of each other and for a common household" (2021, p. 10). Notably, in early January 2021, the Draft Amendment Act to PDVA was opened to public consultation. Among the key proposed amendments are changes to procedures, deadlines, and measures envisioned in the domestic violence legislation, including concomitant and consequential changes to the Criminal Code, the establishment of a central registry for DV cases, as well as of a national body to formulate, implement and evaluate policies and coordinate the actions of institutions involved in counteraction to domestic violence (2021, p. 10). As of January 2022, it is yet to be seen whether the proposed amendments will be adopted, where the time lag of the legislative body is attributed to a destabilized political environment, namely the lack of regular government throughout most of 2021 and the holding of three parliamentary elections in the same year.

Despite the lack of a definition of GBV in Bulgarian legislation, it needs to be stressed that there are international documents, which give rise to certain legal obligations for Bulgaria and contain a definition of gender-based violence. *Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime* defines GBV as:

> *Violence that is directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression or that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately, is understood as gender-based violence. It may result in physical, sexual, emotional or psychological harm, or economic loss, to the victim. Gender-based violence is understood to be a form of discrimination and a violation of the fundamental freedoms of the victim and includes violence in close relationships, sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment), trafficking in human beings, slavery, and different forms of harmful practices, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour crimes'. Women victims of gender-based violence and their children often require special support and protection because of the high risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, of intimidation and of retaliation connected with such violence (Preamble, para 17).*

This comprehensive definition is important for several reasons. Firstly, directives are legal acts setting goals to be achieved by all EU member states. However, states choose their own way to do that, as they must adopt measures to transpose directives into national law to achieve the respective goal. In Bulgaria, the directive is partially transposed, a process which is linked to upcoming amendments in the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC, 2006). The 2020 draft Law amending and supplementing the Criminal Procedure Code (Council of Ministers, 2020), in the amendments it introduces to the Law on Support

and Financial Compensation of Victims of Crime, in Chapter IIa, art. 7a (2)(2) creates a presumption that victims of crime committed in the conditions of domestic violence have specific protection needs. The draft law also envisions the possibility of a same-sex interrogation procedure for domestic violence victims. The instrument, however, is no longer under public deliberation and its provisions are not adopted to date, despite several rounds of CPC amendments in 2020-2021. Secondly, the Victims' Directive firmly links GBV to discrimination and establishes it as a violation of fundamental rights of the victim. This is important because it helps "extract" DV from the realm of the private and family sphere and place it firmly into the realm of state obligations for protection and promotion of human rights.

At the international level, the 1992 CEDAW Committee *General recommendation No. 19: Violence against women*, updated and complemented by *General recommendation No. 35* in 2017, states that "[t]he definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty" (OHCHR, 1993). The document lists concrete rights, which GBV against women violates. This definition is relevant because Bulgaria has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (to which General Recommendation 19 is linked) in 1982. The provisions of these two documents underscore the need for Bulgaria to espouse a legal definition of GBV and elaborate on specific measures to prevent it and protect victims. It needs to be clarified that whilst General Recommendations are not legally binding, their main purpose is to interpret authoritatively the content of human rights provisions and encourage further the states to fulfil their legal duties, arising out of binding international law.

The areas where the country has to take urgent steps – through amending and adopting legislation, designing and implementing new policies, and/or monitoring and improving existing ones – have been repeatedly and clearly identified by numerous reports authored by international bodies and experts and national civil society organisations. These areas range from practical ones such as expanding the number and capacity of shelters offering support services to more intangible ones such as addressing traditional gender inequalities and stereotypes by means of education and public awareness campaigns.

Illustrating the latter, a 2019 report of the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) observes that unaddressed weaknesses in domestic civil and criminal legislation points "to a low level of gender sensitivity in regulating crimes against persons in close relations" (Mosneagu, 2019, p. 7). According to EIGE's Gender Equality Index for 2019, "[b]etween 2005 and 2017, Bulgaria improved its Index score but had a much lower score than the EU in the entire period. Moreover, Bulgaria has moved towards gender equality at a slower rate, meaning that the gap with the EU has increased over time" (EIGE, 2019). Even more alarmingly, in Bulgaria "48 % of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence by any perpetrator in the past 12 months have not told anyone. This rate is the

highest in the EU-28" (EIGE, 2017). [9] However, BHC's Human Rights in Bulgaria Report for 2019 concludes that Bulgaria still lags behind in meeting its commitments to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2020). The level of underreporting of acts of violence is a sign that countering underlying gender inequalities and stereotypical representations of women and their role in the family is essential.

This is echoed in a report on Bulgaria by the *Commissioner for Human Rights of the CoE* Dunja Mijatović, who urges authorities to "fight sexist prejudices based on the idea of inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men in society", as these increase social tolerance of VAW and DV and limit authorities' ability to deal with pressing issues and ensure victims' protection (Mijatović, 2020, p. 22). Dubravka Šimonović, *UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*¸ notes that the troublingly low reporting rates "reveal that domestic violence is still considered a private matter, tolerated and normalized, and women are still facing social and legal barriers to reporting domestic violence" (UNHRC, 2020, p. 13).

In addition to underreporting, scarcity of data related to GBV, VAW, and DV is another commonly reported problem. Šimonović is but one of the myriad of voices calling for accurate and accessible data on all forms of GBV against women in Bulgaria, disaggregated by relevant factors, such as sex, age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (2020, p. 13). An obvious limiting factor for this methodology and the upcoming monitoring analysis is the difficulty in acquiring and the absence of data. However, such limitations have the potential to reaffirm the areas where data are especially needed and possibly identify new such realms for government-commissioned data-collection and critical analysis.

In sum, the first important assumption on which this monitoring methodology is designed is that GBV and DV are not isolated phenomena. They should be viewed, approached, and analysed in conjunction with discrimination, gender inequalities, and traditional long-accepted positions about the role of women in the family and in society as a whole. The latter feed into a common understanding that DV belongs to the sphere of private family life and therefore, remains out-of-reach for state's intervention. The second central assumption is that any efficient and effective policy measures to counter GBV, VAW, DV and DGBV should take into consideration those groups that are especially vulnerable to acts of violence. Šimonović (2020) identifies them very clearly in her report: Roma women and girls, women from the LGTBI community, migrant women, women in detention, and women victims of trafficking. Those vulnerable groups, alongside other such groups that are characterized by higher risk of becoming victims of GBV/DV, will be further examined in Appendix VII on intersectional vulnerabilities.

9 The estimates here are based upon EIGE's own calculations on FRA data.

3.3 Utilising the Methodology outside the Bulgarian Context

Originally, the methodology was developed to be used in the Bulgarian context, as all its idiosyncrasies were taken into account in the process. The piloting of the Methodology (to be discussed below and in a separate Monitoring Report) also took place in Bulgaria. The document would have offered a different structure or a different set of indicators, had the country ratified the Istanbul Convention. If, for instance, female genital mutilation (FGM) or honour crimes had been widespread, they would have been placed in the centre of the desk research and the discussion with experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders. However, this does not prevent researchers and monitoring specialists from adapting the methodology to different country contexts and utilising it to take stock of the existing laws, policies, strategies and institutional practice there. Most of the assumptions it is built upon, its premises and aspects can indeed be considered universal.

4. Monitoring the Policy and Institutional Framework for Countering DGBV

Monitoring is a process where performance is measured and assessed in order to ensure efficient, effective, and adequate management of outcomes and outputs in a particular field or of a particular project, program or policy. Performance is defined as the progress towards the achievement of certain results or the reaching of a certain phase. Two types of monitoring can be discerned:

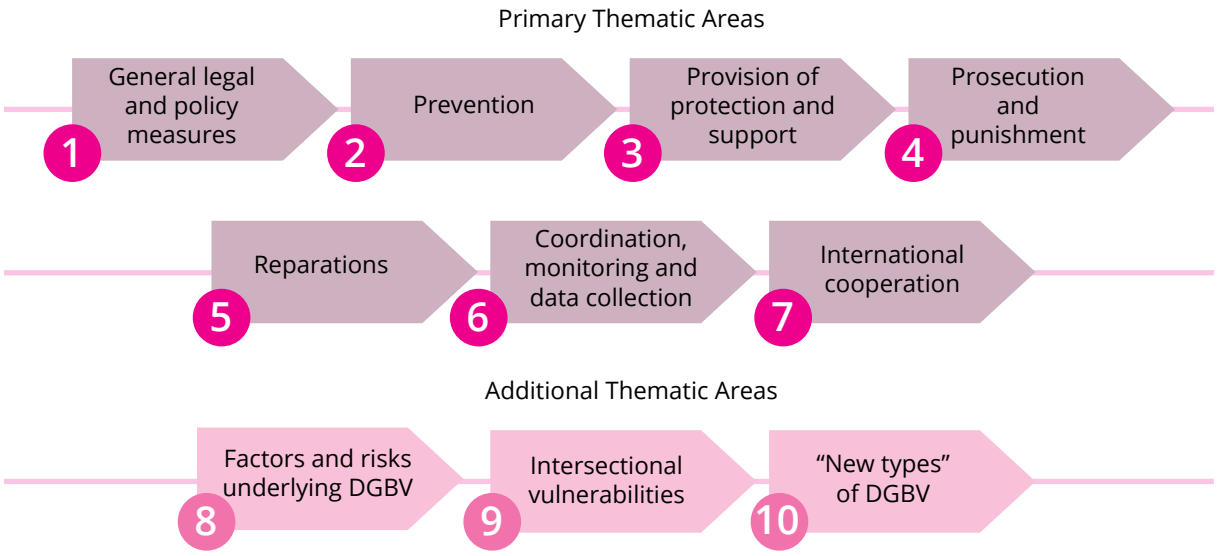
- Process monitoring which measures and assesses policies and activities (*the output*);
- Impact monitoring which measures and assesses the results of policy implementation and activities (*the outcome*) (Mancheva, Nonchev and Ivanova, 2015).

4.1 Structure of Monitoring

Three levels of analysis are covered in several thematic areas essential to countering DGBV. To identify these areas and the corresponding indicators, we rely on key international documents on GBV and VAW, and especially *General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General recommendation No. 19*, produced by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The main thematic areas are: *General legal and policy measures, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and punishment, Reparations, Coordination, monitoring and data collection and International cooperation*. This categorisation further reflects the substantive chapters of the Istanbul Convention and its 4Ps (prevention, protection, prosecution and co-ordinated policies), which although not ratified by Bulgaria, remains a key international human rights law instrument in this area. Finally, the sectioning of Bulgaria's national programme to prevent and protect women and children against domestic violence closely follows the one offered by General Recommendation No 35, which increases these areas' applicability as the building blocks of this methodology.

Three additional thematic areas follow, concentrating on *Factors and risks underlying DGBV, Intersectional vulnerabilities, and New types of DGBV*. They explore issues such as gender-based discrimination and lack of equality, as well as developments and gaps related those especially vulnerable to DGBV in the Bulgarian context such as children, Roma women and girls, women with disabilities, migrant women, and new and evolving types of DGBV that are objectively less explored in the Bulgarian context. The three additional thematic areas are essential to both understanding the phenomenon of DGBV and formulating an adequate response.

Figure 2. Primary and Additional Thematic Areas of the Methodology



Source: Center for the Study_ of Democracy, 2021

Level of analysis 1: Assessment of the policy, legal and institutional framework related to DGBV

This level of assessment focuses on evaluating the general national framework for countering DGBV. The framework rests on relevant national strategies and annual action plans, on legal and policy documents currently in force, and on procedural and internal norms and rules of the competent institutions. The latter cover law enforcement, judiciary, healthcare, social services and social inclusion, education, anti-discrimination, etc. This level of analysis provides an understanding about the environment where the institutions function and the policies, action plans, and programs are implemented. Here, we distinguish between primary and secondary indicators, the primary being those that are essential to the monitoring exercise and the effort to describe the status quo. Data related to these indicators is relatively easy to find and available, although at times multiple sources have to be consulted to check the data's veracity. Experts should prioritise these indicators when applying the monitoring methodology. Secondary indicators are those that are still important but could be deprioritized due to insufficient time, or inaccessible or inexistent data. Insights on any of the secondary indicators, however, assist in painting a comprehensive and thorough picture of the situation, as it is experienced by professionals, policy-makers, victims, perpetrators, and other interested or affected individuals.

Level of analysis 2: Assessment of outputs and outcomes related to DGBV

At this level, both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative data are gathered by means of indicators related to the already identified areas. These indicators are selected, developed, and grouped following efforts to design similar indicators already taking place at international and European levels. For instance, they are informed by the Illustrative indicators on violence against women prepared by the OHCHR and the Gender-based violence indicators of EIGE.

To guarantee optimal comprehensiveness, and taking into consideration that quantitative (statistical) data might be unavailable or incomplete, outcomes will also be qualitatively assessed based on information collected through desk research and expert interviews. To facilitate qualitative assessment and ensure the extraction of in-depth insights, the authors formulated several questions, which the researcher(s) might pose to themselves and their interviewees to build a fuller picture of the state's obligations, their essence and level of implementation. Answering these questions is not obligatory – they are intended as mental constructs, which the researchers could use to analyse and assess different aspects of counter-DGBV measures. They are inspired by existing standards, analytical frameworks and criteria[10]:

1) Are the measures, services, and tools developed by the state to address DGBV widely *available* to individuals, experts, and institutions? Is there sufficient information about the presence of these measures, services and tools?

2) Are these physically and economically *accessible* for all, without any discrimination? Are there certain groups who have no access to these measures and tools and if yes, why is that the case?

3) Are policies and programs *effective*? Did they achieve their main objectives and goals according to those who are designing, implementing and monitoring them?

4) Are policies and programs designed with *ethical considerations* in mind? For instance, do they have the victim's rights at their centre?

5) Are policies and programs *administratively feasible* – do the respective departments and institutions have the resources and capacity (human, financial, technical) necessary to the implement them?

An even simpler, but equally useful, approach for the researcher to take at the end of data collection is to pause and consider the data in its entirety by asking: *1) Are we doing the right things? 2) Are we doing them right? 3) Are we doing them on a large enough scale?*[11] The authors believe these to be valuable techniques for the team applying the methodology to make sense of the gathered information.

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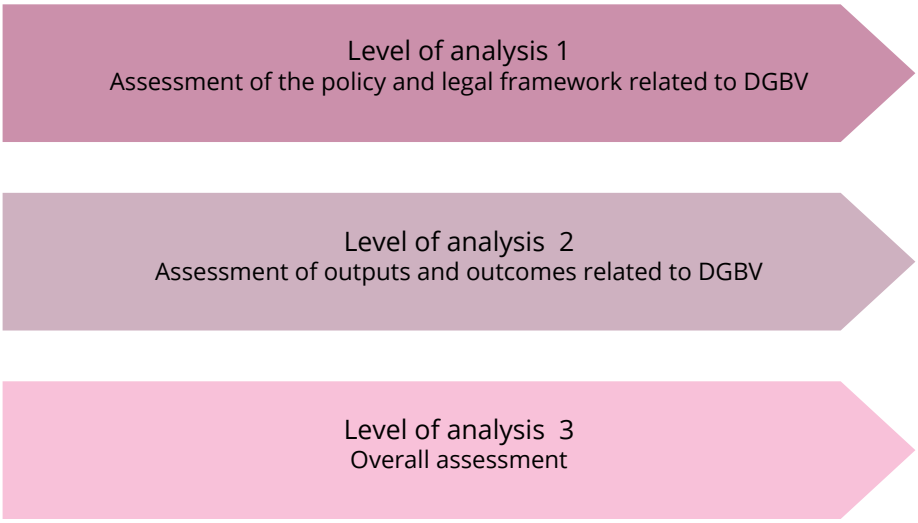
10 See, the 4As Framework (Dowell-Jones, 2004, p. 31) and Kraft and Furlong's criteria for policy analysis (Kraft and Furlong, 2014).

11 See, UN Basic Terminology and Frameworks for Monitoring and Evaluation (UNAIDS, 2010, pp. 47-54)

Level of analysis 3 Overall assessment

This level of analysis presents an overall assessment of the situation in Bulgaria with respect to existing legislation and policies addressing DGBV and related outcomes. It aims to help those applying the monitoring methodology to structure and organise better the findings gathered during the previous two levels. Thus, this level will create a fuller picture of the situation in the country, identifying possible gaps in policy and offering ways to fill in those gaps.

Figure 3. Levels of analysis



Source: Center for the Study of Democracy, 2021

Assessment background

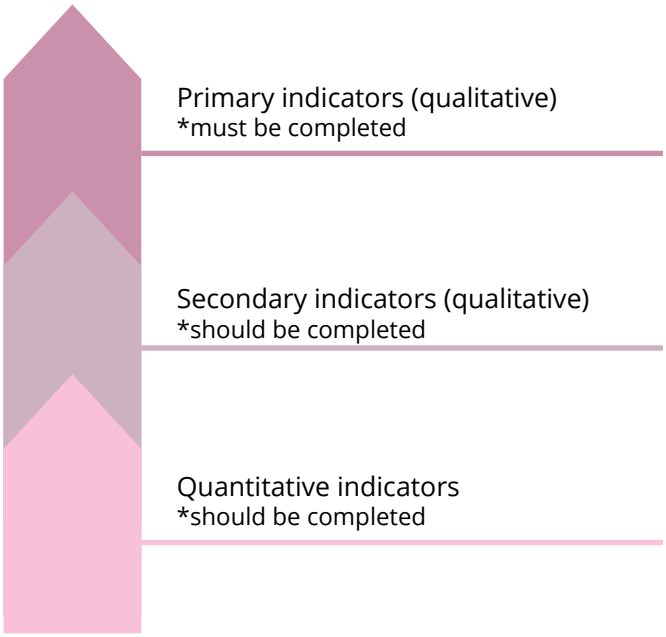
The background to the assessment will be formed by the review of the legal and institutional framework on DGBV in Bulgaria, as well as by a preliminary desk research on the stakeholders, who could influence the design and the implementation of programs and initiatives addressing DGBV. The stakeholders will be actively involved as respondents during the actual monitoring stage.

The gathered quantitative and qualitative data, based on the indicators and through desk research, written requests for information to competent bodies and focus groups and semi-structures interviews, will be analysed and included in a Monitoring report. The methods for data collection are elaborated on here in Chapter 5, while a model structure of the monitoring report is offered in Chapter 6.

4.2 Monitoring Indicators

Figure 4 presents the indicators' structure that is supposed to guide, provide focus to and facilitate the efforts to gather data through desk research, written requests for information to relevant state, district, municipal institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs), focus groups and in-depth interviews from representatives of the said institutions and CSOs.

Figure 4. Thematic Indicator Section Structure



Source: Center for the Study of Democracy, 2021.

Section 1: General legal and policy measures

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the general legal and policy measures, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary Indicators

1. Legal, strategic and policy documents focusing on domestic (and gender-based) violence currently in place

Clarification

These might include national primary and secondary legislation, a national program or strategy, an annual plan of action, etc. Indicate whether these documents are sufficiently binding and in compliance with all state obligations stemming from international and regional legal documents.

2. Criminalized types of DV

Clarification

Indicate which types are criminalized. Are there any gaps?

3. Specific, comprehensive, and unambiguous definitions of DV and its types and GBV and its types

Clarification

Indicate whether the above-mentioned documents define clearly DV and its types (sexual violence, physical violence, emotional and psychological violence, harmful traditional practices, and socio-economic violence) and GBV. If the answer is "No", identify clearly the gaps.

4. Victim- and gender-centeredness of the documents

Clarification

Indicate whether the documents and the measures they outline are built around a victim-centred approach[12] and/or imply gendered understanding of the phenomena at hand (VAW, GBV, IPV, and DV)?

12 A broad definition of the victim-centred approach is provided by EIGE: "A victim-centred approach to intimate partner violence places the rights, needs and concerns of female victims at the centre of any interventions to manage risk" (EIGE, 2021a). Practices stemming from a victim-centred approach may involve the victim and the perpetrator appearing in court on different dates to minimise psychologically-traumatic encounters between them, or taking serious measures to prevent secondary victimization or humiliation of the victim during the trial, or non-disclosure of the victim's identity or any information irrelevant to the trials, such as the victim's sexual history.

5. **Periodic evaluation of legal, strategic and policy documents**

Clarification

Indicate if these documents and the measures they envision are subject to regular analysis and evaluation. How often does this happen? Are there mechanisms for external evaluations and recommendations to be taken into account – for example, originating from the CSO sector or regional and international organisations and institutions? Are these mechanisms implemented?

Secondary Indicators

1. **Sufficiency of available resources (human and financial)**

Clarification

Indicate whether more human and financial resources are needed at the national, regional and local levels to effectively implement laws and policies for the prevention of DGBV. Indicate whether the available human resources/personnel are regularly and adequately trained.

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years.

In the past five years:

Clarification

"In the past five years" denotes the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be the 2017-2021 period. Please, include an aggregate number for the entire period, and use the "Overall assessment" field to identify any significant developments within that period, if necessary.

1. Number of **new legal acts**
2. Number of **substantive amendments** to relevant legislation[13]
3. Number of **policy and strategic** documents
4. Number of **reports and/or analyses** of state institutions published in relation to these documents (made public)

13 These would include amendments to the actual regulation a piece of legislation contains, i.e. excluding technical amendments, e.g. changing the name of an institution, or of another law.

In the past year:

Clarification

„"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

5. Prevalence (%) of **physical violence** by intimate partners since the age of 15 (EIGE Gender Statistics)

6. Prevalence (%) of **sexual violence** by intimate partners since the age of 15 (EIGE Gender Statistics)

7. Prevalence (%) of **rape** by intimate partners since the age of 15 (EIGE Gender Statistics)

8. Prevalence (%) of **sexual assault** by intimate partners since the age of 15 (EIGE Gender Statistics)

9. Annual number of women victims of **intimate partner violence**[14] (aged 18 and over) committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police

10. Annual number of women **victims of physical**[15] intimate partner violence (aged 18 and over) committed by men (aged 18 and over) as recorded by police11. Annual number of women victims of psychological[16] intimate partner violence (aged 18 and over) committed by men (aged 18 and over) as recorded by police

12. Annual number of women **victims of economic**[17] intimate partner violence (aged 18 and over) committed by men (aged 18 and over) as recorded by police

13. Annual number of women **victims of sexual** intimate partner violence (aged 18 and over) committed by men (aged 18 and over) as recorded by police

14. Women victims of **intimate femicide** (aged 18 or over) committed by a male intimate partner (aged 18 or over), as a share of the women victims of femicide

14 This type of violence may involve mild, moderate and/or severe bodily injury, exposure to danger, imprisonment, solicitation for prostitution and other definitions of relevant offences in the Criminal Code.

15 This type of violence may involve mild, moderate and/or severe bodily injury.

16 This type of violence may involve stalking, harassment, slander, insult.

17 This type of violence might involve the victims not being allowed to work or not having their own financial resources or funds for basic needs. In addition, the victim's personal belongings, or those acquired during the marriage (furniture, clothes, household items, etc.), are destroyed, thrown away or sold, or the perpetrator threatens these actions if the victim does not obey.

15. Number of **projects financed**[18] under the annual call for proposals for services for victims and perpetrators of DV (information to be obtained through official written request)

16. Total **value** of the financed projects (information to be obtained through official written request

Clarification

Overall assessment (max 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

18 By this, the authors mean projects financed by the Ministry of Justice's budget for implementation of: 1) programs for prevention of and protection from domestic violence, related to: a) preparation and approval of programs in educational institutions, b) engaging the judiciary and the Ministry of Interior units, c) monitoring of legislation's implementation, d) conducting seminars and conferences, e) publications; 2) programs providing assistance to victims of domestic violence, which include: (a) social, psychological and legal counselling and professional assistance, (b) referral to other professionals and interdisciplinary counselling, as well as to social services for victims of domestic violence; 3) training of persons engaged in protection; 4) specialized programs, which include psychological consultations, attended by persons who have committed domestic violence.

Section 2: Prevention

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the area of prevention, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary Indicators

1. Specific mention of prevention and preventive measures by key legal, policy and strategic documents currently in force

Clarification

Indicate whether prevention is specifically mentioned in key documents identified in Section I.

2. Contents and characteristics of the prevention-related measures

Clarification

Indicate whether these measures address any or all of the following:

- Harmful stereotypes, prejudices, customs and practices: this could be done through integration of content on gender equality into school curricula or through awareness-raising programs and campaigns promoting an understanding of DGBV as unacceptable and harmful.
- Building intolerance towards violence and aggressive behaviour: this could include training and awareness raising in the educational system, especially for children in primary and secondary education, as well as information campaigns among teenagers, university students, and young adults, and may be financed and/or implemented by the state or by the private/Non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector.
- Working with and encouraging media to eliminate discrimination against women, including harmful and stereotypical portrayal: this could be done through self-regulatory mechanisms by media organisations (broadcast, online or social media) or guidelines for appropriate coverage of cases of DGBV against women by the media, etc.
- Working with and encouraging the advertising, marketing and IT sectors (and private companies as a whole) to eliminate discrimination against women, including harmful and stereotypical portrayal: this could be done through self-regulatory mechanisms or guidelines on how to recognise and appropriately address cases of V.

- Capacity-building, education and training on the topic of prevention for members of the judiciary, lawyers and law enforcement officers, including forensic medical personnel, legislators and health-care professionals and all education, social and welfare personnel
- Potentially harmful institutional practices and ways to eradicate them.

3. Effectiveness of prevention-related measures in terms of creating awareness and understanding what constitutes DGBV.

Clarification

Indicate whether the measures lead or contribute to:

- Victims or vulnerable individuals being conscious of signs, types, and manifestations of DGBV, being aware that they are at risk and should seek help
- Perpetrators being conscious of the fact they have committed DGBV (immediately after the violent act or during/following prosecution, rehabilitation, sanctions, etc.)

Secondary Indicators

1. Format and frequency of trainings, education sessions and capacity-building discussed in the Primary indicators section:

Clarification

Indicate whether:

- These are mandatory, recurrent and up-to-date with the newest international and national standards and
- There are mandatory trainings and sessions for new employees
- Trainings and sessions on general topics and/or specialized trainings and sessions are conducted in all geographic regions in Bulgaria
- These education programs and trainings touch upon any or all of the following: a) national legal provisions and national institutions on GBV against women, the rights of victims, international standards and associated mechanisms and their responsibilities in that context; b) existing practices and regulations channelling stereotypes against women that need to be addressed; c) how gender stereotypes and bias lead to discrimination and GBV against women and inadequate responses to them; d) trauma and its effects, the power dynamics that characterise intimate partner violence and the varying situations of women experiencing diverse forms of GBV.

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past five years:

Clarification

"In the past five years" denotes the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be the 2017-2021 period. Please, include an aggregate number for the entire period, and use the "Overall assessment" field to identify any significant developments within that period, if necessary.

1. Number of **awareness-raising campaigns**
2. Number of **people reached** by these campaigns (scope of the audience reached)
3. Number of **initiatives directed at or initiated by media, advertising and PR sector** to eliminate stereotypical portrayal and ensure adequate coverage of DGBV

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

4. Number of **primary and/or secondary students** reached by content on gender equality in school curricula. Provide details on how this was achieved (actions taken, impact assessment, etc.).

5. Number of **trainings and education programs** conducted with and for each group identified in point 1 of Secondary Indicators in the Framework Assessment

6. Number of **experts/professionals reached** by the trainings and education programs

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Section 3: Provision of support and protection

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the area of support and protection, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary Indicators

1. Specific mention of protection measures in the legal, policy and strategic documents

Clarification

Such may include: access to court, access to emergency protection measures, access to medical evaluation, obliging the perpetrator to refrain from committing acts of domestic violence, removing the perpetrator from the common dwelling, prohibiting the perpetrator from contacting, approaching the victim or being in the victim's vicinity, relocating children from the perpetrator, requiring the perpetrator to attend correctional programs, access to rehabilitation programs for the victim, access to information in relation to Protection orders, access to information in relation to breaches of or changes in measures upon the perpetrator[19].

2. **Effective enforcement of the measures identified in point 1**

Clarification

Indicate whether according to your observations and knowledge these measures are enforced.

3. **Mandatory, recurrent and effective capacity-building, education and training**

Clarification

Indicate if there if such trainings are being conducted. They are focused on the topic of protection for members of the judiciary, lawyers and law enforcement officers, including forensic medical personnel, legislators and health-care professionals and all education, social and welfare personnel.

4. **Monitoring tools and risk assessment mechanisms available to first responders (police, medical staff, social workers, etc.)**

Clarification

Indicate the availability of such mechanisms for efficient and timely identification of heightened risks or instances of DGBV. These may

19 These are based on the PDV and art. 67 of the Criminal Procedure Code..

include specialized questionnaires applied when responding to signals for domestic arguments, treating patients, providing prenatal care, etc.

5. Accessibility and sensitivity to the victim's needs of the protection measures

Clarification

Indicate whether the victim has effective and sufficient access to administrative and financial assistance, psychological and medical services, education, housing and employment assistance? Which measures are not accessible?

6. Effective multisector referral mechanism

Clarification

Indicate whether such a mechanism exists and discuss any weaknesses as well.

7. Multiplicity of actors engaged in protection measures and services

Clarification

Indicate if there evidence of inter-agency cooperation, and engagement of non-governmental service providers in protecting victims and in developing and implementing best practices for protection of victims.

8. Adequacy of emergency protection measures and services

Clarification

For instance, indicate if there is evidence of sufficient, geographically-relevant and quality emergency housing (shelters), as well as operational and easily-accessible emergency hotlines operated by the state or a subcontractor of the state specifically for victims of gender-based domestic violence.

9. Availability of comprehensive and clear information regarding protection

Clarification

Indicate if this information is available both offline and online.

Secondary Indicators

1. Unenforced measures for the protection of DGBV victims

Clarification

Indicate if there are protection measures present in the legal and policy framework, which are not enforced in practice? Refer to the list in 1, Section Primary indicators.

2. Currently missing measures

Clarification

Indicate if there are mandatory or desirable measures, prescribed by international organisations or international law, which are currently missing in the country. You may refer to CEDAW for mandatory or the CoE Convention for desirable measures on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

3. Measures protecting privacy and safety

Clarification

Indicate if there are measures protecting the privacy and the safety of victims and their family members – which are they and to what extent are they effective?

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

1. Total number of **shelters and support centres** in the country;

2. Number of **new shelter or support centres** opened in the last year;

3. Total number of **places in shelters**;

4. Number of **women seeking assistance in support centres**;

5. Number of **women accommodated** in shelters;

6. Number of women who have sought **free/low-cost legal aid** (could be measured by number of requests made to the National Legal Aid Bureau or relevant CSOs);

7. Number of women who **received legal aid**;

8. Number of **eviction orders** issued:

9. Number of **Protection orders** issued and applied;

10. Number of **Immediate protection orders** issued (PDVA measure);

11. Number of **restraining orders** issued (PDVA measure);

12. Number of **restraining orders breached** (substantial breaches having reached the criminal justice system could be measured by the number of criminal proceedings under Art. 296 of the Criminal Code);

13. Number of women seeking **medical aid** and reporting DGBV to doctors;

14. Number of hospitals that have a **crisis unit/service** for victims of violence, including DGBV;

15. Number of **trainings and education programs** conducted with and for each group identified in point 4 of the Framework Assessment

16. Number of **experts/professionals** reached by the trainings and education programs

17. Number of calls received on the **DGBV hotlines**

18. Number of calls received on the **national emergency line (112)** pertaining to cases of DGBV;

19. Any other relevant quantitative data (please, explain).

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Section 4: Prosecution and punishment

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the area of prosecution and punishment, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary indicators

1. **Prosecution and punishment of DGBV perpetrators** addressed in legal, policy and strategic documents in force

Clarification

Provide insight from civil and criminal legislation, as well as non-legal documents on the extent, scope and breadth of prosecution and punishment measures/sanctions.

2. **Victim-sensitive approach of the prosecution and punishment processes**

Clarification

Comment on the availability of free legal aid and/or representation for victims from both state and non-governmental sources; on the adequacy measures for informing and preparation of the victim for the proceedings; on the availability of support persons, etc.

Secondary indicators

1. Availability of mechanisms on the prevention of reoffending

Clarification

Such include obligatory relocation from the common dwelling, relocation of any children under the perpetrator's care, probation, monitoring of the perpetrator, restraining orders, correction programs, and rehabilitation services, all targeting offenders.

2. Commensurability of legal sanctions

Clarification

Comment on the extent to which the legal sanctions are commensurate with the gravity of the crime.

3. Ex officio prosecution for at least the most serious types of DGBV

Clarification

Ex officio denotes the availability of prosecution mechanisms irrespective of the victim's individual petition or lack thereof.

4. Equitable criminalisation of all types of DGBV, and sanctioning of any additional types or sub-categories

Clarification

Comment on the presence of additional guarantees when prosecuting such crimes against vulnerable victims (children and minors, people with disabilities, elderly people, people with intellectual or psychosocial conditions, etc.).

5. Timeliness and adequacy of the prosecution and punishment measures

Clarification

Comment on any evidence that such procedures yield results in a reasonable period of time, and are prioritized by the courts, as well as on the adequacy of damages awarded.

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

1. Number of **criminal** (Criminal Code) and **civil** (PDVA) **cases** against male perpetrators on the relevant provisions of national law;

2. Number of men (aged 18 and over) **prosecuted** for DV against a current or ex- partner

3. Number of men (aged 18 and over) **sentenced** for DV against a current or ex-partner

4. Number of men (aged 18 and over) ordered **to pay a fine** for DV against a current or ex-partner.

5. Number of men (aged 18 and over) sentenced for DV against a current or ex-partner **held in prison or with a sanction** involving a form of deprivation of liberty

6. Number of **court cases** pertaining to DGBV **in European Court on Human Rights** (ECtHR) against Bulgaria (primarily Art. 3 ECHR); Specify how many cases are closed and how many are pending.

7. Number of **complaints** submitted to CEDAW

8. Number of ***ex officio*** criminal procedures;

9. Number of **judicial trainings** related to criminal proceedings against DGBV perpetrators and related position of victims;

10. Number of **magistrates and lawyers trained** on specifics of criminal proceedings against DGBV perpetrators and related position of victims.

11. Number of projects and programs on **rehabilitation of perpetrators**

12. Number of perpetrators included in **rehabilitation programs**

13. Number of **DGBV offenders included** in rehabilitation programs in prisons

14. Number of **prisons offering** such rehabilitation/correctional programs

15. Number of **DGBV offenders included** in out-of-prison rehabilitation programs

16. Number of **offered out-of-prison** rehabilitation/correctional programs

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Section 5: Reparations

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the area of reparations, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary Indicators

1. Availability of **civil compensation** by the offender and **financial compensation** by the state in the key legal, policy and strategic documents currently in force

Clarification

Comment upon any weaknesses

2. Availability of **non-financial reparations** in the key legal, policy and strategic documents currently in force

Clarification

Comment upon types of reparation such as restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition, services for recovery, etc., including who funds and implements / offers them, and any notable weaknesses.

Secondary Indicators

1. Availability of state compensation schemes for criminal injuries

Clarification

Comment on whether compensations are ensured through specific funds or allocations in the budgets of existing funds.

2. Victims' right to claim civil compensation from perpetrators

Clarification

Comment on the adequacy and proportionality of the compensation with respect to the gravity of the crime.

3. Availability of adequate victim compensation awards in the judgments of criminal cases

Clarification

Comment on whether the courts tend to award compensation to victims in DGBV criminal cases, payable by the perpetrator.

4. Actual reception of compensation

Clarification

Include any evidence that victims are actually compensated, especially from the perpetrators, as well as any procedural safeguards that ensure the victim is de facto compensated.

5. Availability of sufficient resources and services in relation to non-financial types of reparation

Clarification

Evaluate the reparation services and resources available to victims, especially in terms of whether the victims can access and benefit from them in reality. Note any impediments of access and utility.

6. Availability of comprehensive and clear information regarding compensations and non-financial types of reparations offline and online

Clarification

Assess the accessibility of information by diverse target groups as well.

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

1. Number of **cases when a victim of DV** perpetrated by a current or ex male partner **benefited** from a state financial compensation scheme

2. Amount of **funds available** for state financial compensation

3. Number of cases when the **perpetrator was ordered to compensate** the victim

4. Number of cases when the **perpetrator actually compensated** the victim

5. Number of cases when **bailiffs** were necessary to ensure compensation

6. Number of **beneficiaries of victim rehabilitation** facilities /programmes/ resources

7. Number of **state facilities offering victim rehabilitation** or other types of non-financial remedy

8. Number of **NGO facilities offering victim rehabilitation** or other types of non-financial remedy

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Section 6: Coordination, monitoring and data collection

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the area of coordination, monitoring and data collection, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary Indicators

1. **National coordination body** responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relevant policies and measures

Clarification

Please, identify any special body tasked with overseeing the policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women.

2. Availability of a system or a mechanism to r**egularly collect, analyse, and publish comprehensive statistical data** related to DGBV

Clarification

List specific and general mechanisms, if applicable.

3. Availability of a mechanism to **review, analyse and evaluate** the implementation of relevant policies, projects and activities

Clarification

Highlight such monitoring vis-à-vis the National Programme for Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, and any project activities financed by the Ministry of Justice.

Secondary Indicators

1. Reporting of the coordination body

Clarification

Provide information on the reporting activities of the coordination body, especially in terms of time frames and contents. Highlight whether the body issues comments and recommendations.

2. Key functions of the coordination body

Clarification

Enumerate the key functions and provide a brief assessment of their implementation and effectiveness.

3. Multi-agency cooperation

Clarification

Comment on the manner in which the coordination body fosters multi-agency cooperation. If it does not, comment on implications.

4. Compliance of collecting and maintaining data on DGBV with international standards and safeguards.

Clarification

This includes legislation on data protection, internationally accepted norms for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and ethical principles.

5. State support for surveys, research programs and studies on DGBV

Clarification

This includes undertaking, commissioning or supporting such activities on part of the state.

6. Involvement of CSOs, victims' associations, private sector and other non-state actors actively involved in coordination, monitoring and data collection

Clarification

Comment on the framework and character of their involvement.

7. Public availability of comprehensive and clear information resulting from data collection and analysis

Clarification

Provide detail whether such information is available and accessible offline and online..

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year

period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

1. Number of **meetings** of the multi-agency group

2. Number of **reports/analyses** produced by the national coordination mechanism

3. Number of **consultations with the CSO sector** (of the multi-agency working group or in general) in case a national coordination mechanism is in place

4. Number of **joint seminars** bringing together representatives of state institutions and the CSO sector, in case a national coordination mechanism is not in place

5. Number of **studies, projects, or surveys** produced by the state on the topic of DGBV

6. Number of **studies, projects, or surveys** commissioned by the state and conducted by CSOs and academic institutions on the topic of DGBV

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Section 7: International cooperation

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible, avoiding a Yes/No/I do not know answer only. Feel free to add any other information related to the area of international cooperation, which you consider relevant and verified. Assessment for the Primary indicators is mandatory, while such for the Secondary indicators is highly encouraged.

Primary Indicators

1. Participation in regional and/or international initiatives to eliminate and respond to DGBV

Clarification

Provide detail on any such initiatives in which the state actively participates. Comment on the impact of those initiatives.

Secondary Indicators

1. Seeking of support from external sources in order to meet human rights obligations by designing and implementing all appropriate measures required to eliminate and respond to DGBV

Clarification

The external sources include (but are not limited to) UN specialised agencies, the international community and civil society. The support sought could include funding, consultations, exchange of best practices, participation in international initiatives, etc.

2. Evidence of implementation of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goals 5, to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, and Goal 16, to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Clarification

Show any evidence of effort to apply SDG 5 and SDG 16 as part of state policy action.

3. Specific engagement with SDG 5 and SDG 16 in legislation and policies on the topic of DV and VAW

Clarification

Provide information on any engagement with the targets of each goal.

4. Availability of comprehensive and clear information regarding the progress and the result of activities supported by external sources or resulting from international cooperation

Clarification

Include any information from external sources, especially funding mechanisms.

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

1. Number of **new projects/initiatives** implemented and/or coordinated by the **state** launched with international support;

2. Number of **new projects/initiatives** implemented and/or coordinated by CSOs launched with international support;

3. Number of **international conferences** and events in country and abroad on the topic of DGBV attended by representatives of the competent institutions;

4. Number of **consultations** with CSOs held or number of CSO events in country and abroad attended by representatives of the competent institutions

5. Number of **progress reports** related to the fulfilment of the relevant SDGs

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps

5. Data Collection Mechanisms and Sources

5.1 Sources of Data

When applying the monitoring methodology, the researcher(s) should rely on both primary and secondary sources of information, which present both qualitative and quantitative data.

Primary sources include laws, regulations, official strategies, action plans, implementation reports strictly addressing domestic violence and discrimination, statistics collected by relevant state (and municipal) institutions, results from surveys targeting professionals in the field, as well as public or restricted-access data banks of agencies and institutions responsible for the implementation of strategies, policies, and action plans and/or for promotion of anti-discrimination policies. Primary sources also include transcripts of interviews and focus groups with stakeholders conducted by the researcher. A list of stakeholders is attached to this publication as Appendix I – this list is not final and should be reviewed and updated periodically.

This data will be further complemented by three groups of secondary sources: 1) data gathered and reports prepared by Bulgarian CSOs working in the field of prevention of DGBV and provision of social services to victims, as well as articles and analyses from trustworthy Bulgarian media (both mainstream and more specialized); 2) data gathered and reports prepared by regional and international experts, bodies, and institutions, such as (but not limited to) the above-mentioned EIGE, FRA, OHCHR, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, etc.; 3) scholarly works (books and journal articles) relevant to the phenomenon of DGBV and specific national setting. Appendix X includes a list of institutions and organisations from which data could be sourced.

5.2 Data Collection Methods

The researcher(s) should aim to gather data for all indicators in all thematic areas to facilitate thorough completion of the monitoring process. The information collected by means of these indicators is used to prepare the monitoring report, described in detail in Chapter 6. It is likely that in some cases, relevant data will be unavailable, incomplete or inconsistent. In such cases, the researcher should specifically acknowledge this lack or scarcity of data and attempt to contextualise it, considering the general situation and environment in the country. The methods to carry out the data collection are outlined below.

Desk research

During the first stage of the data collection, desk research will be performed. It involves the collection of available statistical data and quantitative administrative data, related surveys, various official legal and policy documents, and institutional reports, CSO reports, media accounts, and recent academic literature. Data collected by way of desk research is particularly important for providing an overview of the country-specific context.

Written requests for information/questionnaires

The Access to Public Information Act (APIA, 2000) addressed the right of access of citizens and the responsibility of public bodies to provide public information. Where information on a given indicator is not publicly available or is incomplete, the researcher may send written requests for (qualitative and quantitative) information to the relevant public institutions and CSOs. Where needed and for the purposes of gathering as much information as possible, these requests could take the form of brief lists of concrete questions. The questionnaire must be adapted to the specific respondent or group of respondents (for instance, policy makers, national bodies, public institutions, CSOs) and it will be based on open-ended questions. Appendix II to this publication contains a template for requesting information from relevant institutions to facilitate the collection of such data.

Focus group discussions[20]

The goal of the focus group discussions is to collect in the area of prevention of DGBV and victims' protection,[21] and hence, it is highly recommended that focus group participants are experts with strong prior knowledge and experience about the topic. The insights gathered may also cross-check and enrich information collected through other methods, thus contributing to the comprehensiveness of the final analysis. Importantly, even when the objective situation (i.e. the contents of laws, policies and other documents) can be established via desk research, the focus groups must be used to gather data on respondents' understanding of this objective situation (e.g. how they interpret a legal provision, or how they implement a certain policy measure). It is a good practice for each focus group discussion should have 6-8 participants and its duration should not exceed two hours. [22] The list of relevant stakeholders (Appendix I) will be used as a pool

20 The current project does not provide for a target number of focus group participants. To serve the purposes of this Methodology, we recommend a total number of 50-70 participants (6-8 per discussion).

21 During the project Development of a monitoring methodology and conducting a national monitoring of policy and institutional practice in relation to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria, focus groups took place in 10 towns in Bulgaria (Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Ruse, Samokov).

22 Changes to the number of participants, the duration of the discussions and the modality of their implementation should be adapted to comply with health-related requirements or risks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

of potential focus group participants – these may be invited by formal invitation letters or using informal contacts. Detailed guidelines about organizing and holding a focus group constitute Appendix IV.

Semi-structured interviews

Face-to-face interviews ought be arranged with key staff from state institutions or civil society organisations, or, alternatively, independent experts working in the field of prevention of DGBV and victims' protection. Similarly to focus groups, interviews yield data on respondents' understanding of the objective situation (e.g. how they interpret a legal provision, or how they implement a certain policy measure). The researcher(s) should seek to achieve proportionality when interviewing experts from each of the groups identified above (for instance, if the researcher is conducting six interviews, they should interview no more than two experts from each group)[23] . Recognizing the possibility that some approached experts might be unwilling or unavailable to take part in the project, several mitigation strategies are presented in Section 7 below.

Figure 5. Data collection methods

Source: Center for the Study of Democracy, 2021.

The list of relevant stakeholders (Appendix I) may be used as a pool of potential interviewees. The main purpose of the interviews is to complement data gathered during the desk research and the focus groups to ensure that as much adequate information and insight as possible is collected with respect to the indicators. This information pertains mostly (but is not limited to) to areas such as number of reported cases of DGBV, level of implementation and effectiveness of existing policies, gaps in legislation and policies where improvement is needed. Appendix III includes detailed guidelines on the organisation of the semi-structured interviews. To facilitate data collection, a list of indicative questions that ought to be put forward during each interview included in these guidelines, as to yield

23 For the purposes of the project within which this framework and methodology are developed, we suggest that the researchers conduct four to six interviews. However, during subsequent applications of the methodology, the number of interviews is at the researcher's discretion

comparable and reliable data. Changes to these recommended questions may include redefining or enriching the questions in order to complement or reconfirm findings from desk research and official questionnaires.

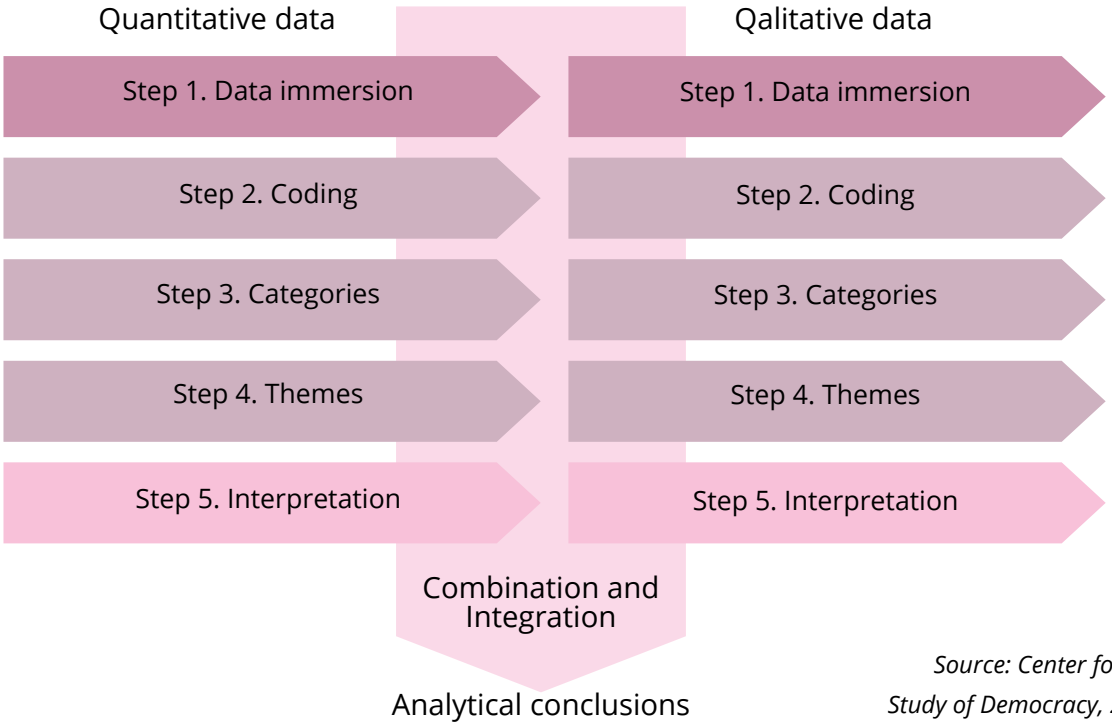
6. Analysis of Results, Monitoring Report and Policy Recommendations

Following the monitoring methodology's application, a monitoring report will be prepared to synthesize, consolidate, and analyse the best available data collected through desk research and fieldwork. The report's main goal will be to identify progress, trends, gaps, and areas of improvement with respect to the legal, policy, and institutional framework for countering DGBV in Bulgaria. Based on these findings, evidence-based recommendations to stimulate cooperation and dialogue between stakeholders, guarantee the adoption of robust counter-measures, and improve policymaking will be elaborated.

6.1 Analytical Approach

The gathered data is analysed using the parallel method, where data sets collected through a mix of methods (quantitative and qualitative) are analysed independently and the findings are then combined or integrated (USAID, 2010, p. 8). This method allows researchers to "use analysis of qualitative data to yield deeper explanations of findings from quantitative data analysis" (2010, p. 8). Due to the potentially limited amount, scope and period of relevance of quantitative data, it must always be viewed in light of available qualitative assessments.

Figure 6. Parallel analytical approach



Source: Center for the Study of Democracy, 2021

The following steps may be considered when performing qualitative analysis, consolidating findings and preparing recommendations (Advocates for Human Rights, 2011). At Steps 1 and 5 both primary and secondary data is synthesized and analysed, whilst Steps 2, 3, and 4 concern mostly data gathered by means of interviews and focus groups.

Step 1: Data immersion

As its name suggests, this step involves profound engagement with the gathered information, often achieved through rigorous and repeated re-reading of transcripts, reports, etc. or re-listening of recordings. Data immersion "lays the foundation for connecting disjointed elements into a clearer picture of the issue being investigated" (Green et al., 2007, p. 547) and allows researchers to "look for patterns that reflect critical issues, exceptions to patterns, and extremes in either direction", as well as for connections and relationships (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2011, p. 42). Prior to the data immersion, the main objectives and key questions should be reviewed.

Step 2: Coding

This is a time-consuming and complex process, whereby the data is examined in detail with the goal of bringing more meaning into it, while paying close attention to the context in which it was gathered. Concepts, themes, patterns, phrases are identified and labelled to assist further analysis. Three rules of thumb should be kept in mind: 1) if the coding is done by more than one researcher, the team should discuss all process specifics and agree on a clear coding protocol; 2) more than one code may be applied to a word, phrase, or a paragraph; 3) with iteration and information accumulation, codes' meanings may be refined and changed, which will necessitate revisiting texts and recoding (Green et al, 2007, p. 548).

Step 3: Categories

This step involves the condensation of meanings into different categories, which then serve as the building blocks of themes. Categorisation usually takes place after coding, but can be also done simultaneously and involves examining possible links between the codes (2007, p. 548). Researchers seek to distinguish specific ways in which interviewees and focus group participants speak about the topic, "looking for a 'good fit' between codes that share a relationship" (2007, p. 548). When writing the monitoring report (product of this monitoring methodology's piloting), categories and themes will be used based on the thematic areas and the indicators listed above. The results of the desk research and the fieldwork may lead to reformulating and clarifying some of these categories and themes or to creating new ones.

Step 4: Themes

Prior to engaging in analysis, researchers can prepare a list of themes, recognizing that: (i) each theme might contain different categories and (ii) some themes might be dropped or modified or new themes might appear during analysis (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2011, p. 42). Themes differ from categories – while categories are about description, themes are about explanation and interpretation, thus casting additional light on the topic of investigation (Green et al., 2007, p. 549). Coming up with meaningful themes requires profound data immersion, as well as excellent knowledge of both the issue at hand and the stakeholders involved in the data collection process. .

Step 5: Interpretation

Using categories, themes, relationships, and links, at this stage, researchers focus on what these all mean and how meanings and findings are important. To complete this step successfully, researchers might try and list key points or lessons learnt as early as during coding and categorisation. As usual, this list will need to be revisited after Step 4 is over and before finalizing the analysis.

Importantly, those applying the methodology should trust their instincts, as although the conclusions should be verified, researchers' intuition and judgement will be incorporated in the entire process (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2011, p. 39).

6.2 Validity and Reliability

Below are some recommendations for ensuring greater reliability and validity of findings and the information presented in the monitoring analysis:

- "Monitors are well trained and follow protocols consistently;
- Multiple methods are used so that data from different sources can be compared - known as triangulation of data;
- The length of the monitoring is sufficient to provide the fact-finder with solid knowledge of the issue;
- Conclusions are reviewed both by experts on the issue and by people who are new to the issue;
- Perceptions and facts are clearly distinguished in the final product; and
- An audit trail is created to ensure that the process can be replicated" (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2011, p. 43)

As this methodology rests on the possibility for conducting mixed method data collection and analysis, it will be especially interesting to see whether findings from qualitative analysis align with results gathered through quantitative methods. However, it

should be noted that any discrepancy could result from factors different from unreliability – for instance, participants might not have time to fill in a survey but opt for participation in a focus group. Alternatively, others might feel more comfortable answering questions in a written form rather than discussing an issue one on one with an interviewer.

Furthermore, validation of results may involve not only colleagues, i.e. other experts, but also external stakeholders, partners, even members of the communities affected by the issue in question. Lastly, during qualitative analysis, generalisation should be avoided, as the process is centred on the individual's experience, knowledge, challenges, behaviour and opinions.

6.3 Limitations

Researchers should clearly indicate and explain the limits to the data collection. This might help improve the monitoring methodology during subsequent revisions and applications, as well as assist relevant stakeholders in identifying and even filling in existing gaps, or researchers – in detecting fields and topics where future research is necessary.

Certain limitations might occur as a result of respondent bias. This is especially true in case of a highly contested and/or largely unfamiliar topic, such as domestic and gender-based violence. The analysis must always take account of this, rather than neutralise it, as the research effort itself relies on how respondents understand, implement and assess the available instrumentarium at national level.

6.4 Structure of the Monitoring Report

We propose the following structure for the monitoring report (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2011, p. 43):

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings
- Analysis of findings
- Recommendations
- Conclusion or afterword
- Appendices, including a list of laws and policies, a list of tables and statistics, templates, glossary, acronyms list, bibliography or reference list

When the monitoring methodology is being applied periodically, each subsequent report must devote a separate section describing trends or highlighting specific

achievements and developments with a distinctly long-term positive effect.

Prior to the conclusion, concrete recommendations to policy-makers, frontline workers or other stakeholders will be formulated. These will centre on how policies, institutional practice and legal measures addressing DGBV can be improved, alongside guidance for other stakeholder groups such as those engaged in service provision, monitoring and evaluation, data collection and research, etc. This section can also be shaped as a separate policy brief.[24] Preferably, the policy brief should be no more than five pages long, written in an accessible and clear language, audience-driven and offering concrete and realistic measures and courses of action.

24 Such is the case with the project within which this monitoring methodology has been developed. A policy brief will follow the monitoring methodology and the monitoring report

7. Challenges and Possible Solutions

7.1 General Challenges[25]

Challenge 1: Data unpublished openly, unavailable, or incomplete

As mentioned above, a very tangible challenge is related to lack or scarcity of data necessary to apply the monitoring methodology and provide a detailed picture of the efforts and measures to address DGBV in Bulgaria. To overcome this challenge, researchers are encouraged to explore alternative sources of information, such as reports by regional or international bodies and institutions or turn to relevant national bodies and institutions with written requests for information. When needed, these requests will include detailed questionnaires. Furthermore, collecting data on the suggested indicators will be facilitated by means of face-to-face interviews with key experts and focus group discussions.

Challenge 2: Difficult collection of field data

Due to the topic's sensitivity, collection of field data could be difficult: researchers may encounter refusal by key experts to be interviewed and by invitees to participate in focus group discussions. In such cases, researchers should look for and contact alternative participants from and beyond the list of stakeholders attached to this methodology. Furthermore, all interviewees and participants in focus groups must receive a participation consent form that notes that confidentiality will be ensured, as well as an information sheet about the project and the purpose of the interview/focus group. Another obstacle to the collection of reliable and comprehensive field data may be the respondents' lack of sufficient knowledge with respect to their legal obligations and the measures they can and should implement to counter DGBV. Therefore, these obligations and measures should be clarified and discussed with them as much as possible during the focus groups and semi-structured interviews by the experts implementing the monitoring methodology.

25 Some of these may also be relevant to the project, however, they are general hurdles that researchers applying the methodology after the project's end could encounter as well.

Challenge 3: Prejudice and stereotypes related to the topic of DGBV

This challenge stems from the sensitivity of the topic and, unfortunately, the still widespread stereotyping of women and lack of understanding about the importance of gender equality in Bulgaria. Researchers will try to mitigate this risk by carefully selecting the stakeholders approached for interviews and other research-related activities. Researchers should also rely on their experience and design the most suitable way to present the topic and the results of the monitoring methodology's application to the public.

7.2 Project-specific Challenges

Challenge 1: Limitations of the monitoring methodology

This methodology, the identified sections of indicators, and the compiled indicators themselves are by no means exhaustive. The document was developed as part of a project with a duration of two years, and consequently, with limited human and financial resources. The field work, encompassing only 10 cities and towns, coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic in Bulgaria, which necessitated conducting some activities online, for instance the consultation with national stakeholders. Therefore, the methodology may and should be revised and complemented. Possible future revisions can revolve around: adding a quantitative component/section, collecting more quantitative data, rephrasing or removing existing indicators or adding new ones, applying the methodology at both national and local levels and then comparing the two sets of findings, fragmenting focus groups even further by organising a separate meeting for each category of stakeholders, holding more semi-structured interviews, collecting testimonies and documenting stories of victims.

Challenge 2: Lack of interest on the part of stakeholders to participate in project meetings

Stakeholders invited to the meeting where the draft methodology is presented for discussion might not have interest in participating. In such cases, Bulgarian partners will look for alternative stakeholders that would be interested in participating in the meeting. These will be included in a 'back-up' list of stakeholders to be contacted if needed. If some stakeholders are hesitant to attend the meeting, but are eager to provide written opinions and comments, they will be provided with the option to do this. The project team will also rely on its very good network of contacts to mitigate this risk.

Challenge 3: Inability to conduct some project activities (face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and meetings) due to force majeure (COVID-19 pandemic)

The novel coronavirus pandemic has necessitated rethinking the way face-to-face events are conducted and the project activities might be negatively impacted by requirements of health authorities to limit the number of participants in such events or cancel planned events altogether. The project team is considering alternative and creative ways to organise and hold events, such as using various platforms and tools for online meetings. It is also following closely the most recent requirements of health authorities to ensure full compliance.

8. Conclusion

The monitoring methodology was designed to help researchers, practitioners and various stakeholders to keep track of and assess existing legal instruments, policies and institutional practices related to DGBV in Bulgaria. It was constructed taking into account the most milestone international and regional documents focusing on women's rights and countering violence against women and gender-based violence. Bulgaria is a party to many of these instruments, but in some cases, the state has to take additional steps to meet its obligations, as clear from the reports and recommendations provided by bodies and experts monitoring the implementation of the documents in question. Some indicators are further informed by the provisions of instruments the country still has not ratified, but is strongly encouraged to do as soon as possible. A glaring example of such a document is the Istanbul Convention adopted by the CoE.

Although the methodology was prepared as part of the project *Development of a monitoring methodology and conducting a national monitoring of policy and institutional practice in relation to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria*, the authors are confident that it can, and should, be reviewed, updated and used periodically after the project's end. It is mostly for this reason that some of the qualitative and quantitative indicators listed above in the different categories ask for data that is not available or full. The authors decided that the current lack or scarcity of data on some issues should not prevent their inclusion into the monitoring methodology. On the contrary, these indicators should serve as a placeholder of sorts – a marker for an area where key information is still missing but very much needed.

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Appendix I: List of Relevant Stakeholders

1. **Council of Ministers** (https://www.gov.bg/)

- National Committee on International Humanitarian Law (https://iisda.government.bg/ras/executive_power/council/2673)
- National Council on Equality between Men and Women (https://saveti.government.bg/web/cc_19/1)
- National Council on Social Inclusion (https://saveti.government.bg/web/cc_201/1)
- National Council on Crime Prevention (https://saveti.government.bg/web/cc_1602/1)
- State agency for child protection (https://sacp.government.bg/)

2. **Ministry of Justice** (https://www.justice.government.bg/)

- National Council for assistance and compensation to victims of crime (http://www.compensation.bg/)
- General Directorate Execution of Sentences (https://justice.government.bg/home/index/a29b3d80-11a0-44c7-909c-9e3328169925)
- Probation services

3. **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy** (https://www.mlsp.government.bg/)

- Social Assistance Agency (https://asp.government.bg);
- Regional Directorates Social Assistance (https://asp.government.bg/en/kontakti/teritorialni-strukturi)

4. **Ministry of Health** (https://www.mh.government.bg/bg/)

- Doctors and hospitals, Emergency centres

5. **Ministry of Education and Science** (https://www.mon.bg/)

- Regional Department of Education (https://www.mon.bg/bg/324)

6. **Ministry of Interior** (https://www.mvr.bg/)

- National Coordinator Domestic Violence, Interdepartmental Group
- MIA, GD National Police (https://www.mvr.bg/gdnp)
- SDIA (Sofia Directorate of Internal Affairs) (https://www.mvr.bg/sdvr)

- Regional Directoratec of the Ministry of Interior (https://bit.ly/3KhIliB)
- Directorate National Emergency Line 112 (https://www.mvr.bg/112)

7. Ministry of Finance (https://www.minfin.bg/)

8. Ministry of Foreign Affair (https://www.mfa.bg/)

- National Coordination Mechanism for Human Rights

(https://www.mfa.bg/bg/3089)

9. Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria (https://www.ombudsman.bg/)

10. District Administrations (https://egov.bg/wps/portal/egov/dostavchitsi%20na%20uslugi/oblastni%20administratsii)

11. Sofia Municipality (https://www.sofia.bg/en/adresi-rajoni);

- 266 Municipalities

12. Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria (https://prb.bg/)

- District Prosecutors' Offices
- Regional Prosecutors' Offices

13. Supreme Court of Cassation of the Republic of Bulgaria (http://www.vks.bg/)

- District Courts (http://www.vks.bg/polezni-vrazki.html)

14. Commission for Protection against Discrimination

(https://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/)

15. National Office for Legal Assistance (https://www.nbpp.government.bg)

16. National Institute of Justice (http://www.nij.bg/)

17. Chamber of Private Enforcement Agents (https://www.bcpea.org/)

18. Emergency lines for victims of DGBV;- ANIMUS, A21, Association "Alliance", 1611- For children

19. District and national media

20. NGOs and social service providers

"Animus Association" Foundation, (https://animusassociation.org/)

"Association Demetra", Burgas (https://demetra-bg.org/)

"Association Naya", Targovishte (https://www.naia-tg.com/)

"Bulgarian Center for Gender Studies" Foundation, (https://bgrf.org/)

"Center for Constructive Justice" Association, Razgrad (https://www.ngo-rz.org/ccj/)

“Nadia Center” Foundation, (http://www.centrenadja.com/)

Association “Alliance for Protection against Gender-Based Violence”, Sofia (https://www.alliancedv.org/)

Association “Dynamics Center”, Ruse (https://dinamika-ruse.bg/project/1018)

Association “Knowledge Success Change”, Dupnitsa, Blagoevgrad (http://www.kscassoc.com/)

Crime Prevention Fund – IGA, Pazardzhik (http://iga-bg.org/bg/home/)

Foundation “Gender Alternatives”, Plovdiv, (https://genderalternatives.org/bg/homepage)

Foundation “H&D Gender Perspectives” - Haskovo and Dimitrovgrad, (http://hdgender.eu/)

Foundation “P.U.L.S.E.“, Pernik (https://www.pulsfoundation.org/bg/)

Gotse Delchev - Crisis Center, (office@podslon.org)

National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (https://www.namrb.org/)

Non-profit association “Youth Forum 2001-Razgrad”, (https://www.yf2001.org/)

Open Door Center Foundation, Troyan

SOS Families at Risk Foundation – Varna, (https://sos-varna.org/)

Women Lawyers Association (https://www.womenlawyers.bg/)

Women’s Association “Ekaterina Karavelova”, Silistra; (https://www.ekaravelova.org/)

Others

21. **Lawyers** working with victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence

Appendix II: Information/Data Request Template

No. […] / [dd].[mm].[yyyy].

To[26]

[address] [addressee name]

[position]

[institution/organisation]

Dear Mr/Madam [surname of addressee],

As [type of organisation], [name of sending organisation] [type and purpose of the activity carried out for which data from the institution or organisation concerned are required].

In relation to [the activities carried out], we would like to receive information on the issues set out in the Appendix to this letter.

A contact person for [the activity carried out] by [name of sending organisation] has been designated as follows: [address] [name], [position] in [department], Tel. […], Mobile […], E-mail address […].

We would be grateful if you would send us the requested information by [dd] [month] [yyyy]. We will notify you of the publication of [the relevant publication where the data provided will be used] in due time.

CHAIRMAN […]: /signature/

[name]

26 This form is exemplary and can be changed depending on the requirements and specifics of the institution/organisation sending it.

APPENDIX

Questions on [type and purpose of the activity carried out for which data from the institution or organisation concerned are required]

1. **[category]**

- [question 1]

- [question 2, example: *What gaps in the efforts to counter DGBV have been filled by the latest legislation and/or policies?; What significant gaps remain? How can they be overcome?]*

2. **[category]**

- [question 1]

- [question 2, example: *How can the capacity of shelters and support centres be increased or optimized? What best practices in the work of first-line specialists can you share? What are the challenges, if any, to implementing these practices another/anywhere in the country?]*

3. **[category]**

- [question 1]

- [question 2, example: *Research and studies on what topics related to DGBV are currently missing in Bulgaria? Why do you think such research is still lacking? What are the specific features of the DGBV phenomenon in Bulgaria? How can these specificities be explained?]*

Please provide copies of [unpublished, currently prepared, forthcoming legislative, strategic or other documents] in this area.

Appendix III: Semi-structured Interviews

Purpose

Semi-structured interviews do not involve asking a strictly set list of questions but instead, rely on a more conversational style. As part of this methodology, semi-structured interviews will be used to gather more specific and in-depth information on topics and themes that were not sufficiently covered during the desk research and the focus group discussions or remain unaddressed altogether.

Interviewees

The interviews (face-to-face or via internet, if needed) will involve key experts working in the field of prevention of DGBV and victims' protection – representatives of government institutions, first responders, representatives of civil society organisations, researchers, independent experts or journalists with comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and any other relevant stakeholders as they emerge. The researchers should seek to achieve proportionality when interviewing members from each group identified above (for instance, if the researchers conduct six interviews, they should interview no more than two experts from each group). However, the choice of potential interviewees should be also based on the outcome of the desk research and the focus groups discussions. As an example, if any still unanswered questions belong to the domain of expertise of a CSO representative, the researchers could concentrate on interviewing more experts from NGOs.

The list of relevant stakeholders (Appendix I) may be used as a pool of potential interviewees. Due to the topic's sensitivity, researchers may encounter refusal by key experts to be interviewed. In such cases, researchers should look for and contact alternative participants from and beyond the list of stakeholders attached to this methodology. In those cases when a potential interviewee is eager to give an interview but is unavailable, researchers should ask him/her for advice/recommendation for a substitute.

Furthermore, researchers will draft and hand out to each interviewee a consent form that notes that confidentiality will be ensured, as well as an information sheet about the project and the overall purpose of the interview.

Specific guidelines

Before the interview

- Interviewers send out to the potential interviewees a written invitation. This is done well in advance (at least two weeks or even a month in case of representatives of government, state or local authorities).

- The interviewers introduce themselves and attach to the invitation the project information sheet and the consent form. Thus, interviewees become familiar with its

contents ahead of the interview. The interviewers notify the invitees that the interview will be recorded – if interviewers disagree, detailed notes will be taken.

- Interviewers ask the interviewees to suggest a date, time and a location for holding the interview. If this is requested, the interviewers could propose several possible options.

- Interviewees are notified that the interview will last about an hour.

During the interview

- Interviewers guide the conversation, listening carefully. They do not judge what is being said and avoid showing emotions like anger, disbelief or shock, as the interviewee speaks.

- A question starting with "who", "how", "why", etc. is preferred to a "Yes/No" question. It is very important to ask the interviewees for a clarification in case their answer or statement is not very clear.

- Interviewers avoid asking long questions or questions that could be broken down into smaller ones, for instance: "What is the capacity of shelters and what do you think it should be?"

- Interviewers are always polite and attentive, treating interviewees with respect.

At the end of the interview

- Interviewers thank the interviewees for their time and ask them for any questions.

- Once again, the interviewers state that they will use the information just collected as part of their research. Therefore, it is very important to have the interviewees' consent on all matters where it is needed. If needed, some names might be relabeled as per the interviewee's wish.

After the interview

- Interviewers are encouraged to go through their notes as soon as possible (even the same day).

Suggested questions

Below we recommend some questions to be addressed during the semi-structured interviews. However, the conversation should not be limited by and to these questions. Moreover, the questions should be reviewed, and if necessary revised, based on the results of the desk research and focus group discussions, especially when these identify missing data and/or incomplete information.

Interview with a representative of the government and state authorities

1. Specific topics to be addressed, especially in view the three biggest achievements and the three biggest challenges and/or gaps experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time):

a) Legislation adopted to address DGBV, including relevant definitions

b) Policies and strategies adopted to address DGBV

c) Financial, human, logistical, and other resources

d) International cooperation – projects, programs, initiatives

e) Data gathered on the phenomenon of DGBV

f) Training and education programs for experts and professionals

g) Prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures

h) National coordination efforts and cooperation between institutions

i) Monitoring and evaluation measures

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the interviewer. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and the focus groups, but some examples are provided below:

- *What gap in efforts to counter DGBV was filled by the newest legislation and/or policy?*
- *Which significant gaps remain to be addressed? What is the way to achieve this?*
- *What, if anything, is still missing from current definitions related to DGBV?*
- *What type of data is most difficult to collect? What could be done to fill this gap?*
- *What topics touched upon during trainings and education programs were described as most useful? What topics are still missing from these trainings and programs?*
- *How would you describe the balance between prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures? Is any area overlooked at the expense of another (others)?*
- *What can be done to improve the cooperation between state and local institutions?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

Interview with first responders

1. Specific topics to be addressed, especially in view the three biggest achievements and the three biggest challenges and/or gaps experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time):

a) Financial, human, logistical, and other resources – including number and location of service centers and shelters, number of available places, capacity of hotlines, etc.

b) Perceptions about the phenomenon of DGBV and related topics: discrimination against women, gender (in)equality, etc.

c) Data gathered on DGBV

d) Training and education programs designed for first responders

e) Prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures

f) Cooperation between institutions

g) Cooperation between institutions, the non-governmental sector and the private sector

h) Differences between the application of DGBV counter-measures at national and local level

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the interviewer. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and the focus groups, but some examples are provided below:

- *How can the capacity of shelters and service centers be increased or optimized?*
- *What best practices in the work of first responders can you share? What are the challenges, if any, before applying these practices elsewhere/everywhere in the country?*
- *What is the dominant perception about DGBV in Bulgaria? How does this perception affect your work?*
- *What type of data is most difficult to collect? What could be done to fill this gap? How could first responders contribute to the gathering of such data?*
- *What topics touched upon during trainings and education programs were described as most useful? What topics are still missing from these trainings and programs?*
- *How would you describe the balance between prevention, protection, prosecution and compensation measures? Is any area overlooked at the expense of another (others)?*
- *What can be done to improve the cooperation among state and local institutions?*
- *What can be done to improve the cooperation between institutions, the non-governmental sector and the private sector?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

Interview with an academia or a civil society representative

1. Specific topics to be addressed, especially in view the three biggest achievements and the three biggest challenges and/or gaps experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time):

a) Legislation adopted to address DGBV, including relevant definitions

b) Policies and strategies adopted to address DGBV

c) Financial, human, logistical, and other resources

d) Data gathered on the phenomenon of DGBV and relevant research

e) Prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures

f) Cooperation between state and local authorities and the non-governmental sector

g) Cooperation between the non-governmental sector, media and businesses

h) Perceptions about the phenomenon of DGBV and related topics: discrimination against women, gender (in)equality, etc.

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the interviewer. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and the focus groups, but some examples are provided below:

- *What gap in efforts to counter DGBV was filled by the newest legislation and/or policy?*
- *Which significant gaps remain to be addressed? How can this be achieved?*
- *What, if anything, is still missing from current definitions of DGBV?*
- *What type of data is most difficult to collect? What could be done to fill this gap?*
- *How would you describe the balance between prevention, protection, prosecution and compensation measures? Is one of these areas overlooked at the expense of another (others)?*
- *What best practices in the area of cooperation between institutions and NGOs can you share? What are the challenges, if any, before applying these practices elsewhere/everywhere?*
- *What is the biggest gap in terms of DGBV research in Bulgaria? Why do you think such research is still missing?*
- *What are the specific features of the phenomenon of DGBV in Bulgaria? To what can these be attributed?*
- *What is the dominant perception about DGBV in Bulgaria? How is DGBV intertwined with issues like gender inequality and gender-based discrimination?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

In case additional groups of stakeholders are approached for interviews, the questions for these interviews will follow a similar format and logic as the sample questionnaires suggested above.

Appendix IV: Focus Group Guide

General Information

At least a week prior to the focus group meeting, the participants receive an information sheet about its format and purpose. This sheet includes at least the following two categories of information:

Focus group parameters:

- Date, time and place, including a detailed map (in case of an in-person arrangement) or link and detailed connection instructions (in case of an online arrangement) of the focus group
- Average duration of the focus group: 40-60 minutes (online meeting) and 90-120 minutes (in person meeting)
- Number of participants: from 6 to 8
- Means of holding the group: in person or in case of extraordinary circumstances – online via Zoom or other online conferencing software
- Focus group agenda: thematic parts and breaks (optional).

Key topics to be discussed:

- The phenomenon of domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria (DGBV)
- Legislative and institutional framework related to DGBV (achievements, gaps, and challenges)
- Prevention, protection, prosecution and policies related to DGBV
- Local, national and international cooperation and initiatives
- Good practices relevant to DGBV in Bulgaria
- Special topics: intersectional vulnerabilities, factors underlying DGBV, media coverage of DGBV, technology-facilitated violence against women, et.

Some topics might be discussed at greater length than others based on the focus group's composition and the expertise and interests of the participants. Emphasis must be placed upon topics that have yielded insufficient data during the desk research phase. The precise topics to be discussed will be decided prior to but also in the course of the meeting.

Invitees are further asked to read and, eventually, sign a form to declare their written consent to take part in the focus group, and participants can indicate whether they consent

to being audio-recorded[27] during the discussion or not.

The organizers of the focus group commit to answering any clarifying questions on the substance and any questions regarding their personal data the participants might have. Invitees will be provided with the option to sign the form both in advance (and return it scanned) or on the spot, immediately before the start of the meeting

Needed resources

In all cases:

At least two persons supporting the organisation of the focus group: one moderator and another person taking notes. Preferably, these two should be able to switch places if needed

Recording equipment (in case the discussion is being recorded)

In case of an in-person arrangement:

Laptop (preferably with a good Internet Connection in case some online information needs to be retrieved for the purpose of the discussion) and possibly, audio-visual equipment for the focus group organizers

Flipchart and flipchart markets

Sufficiently large meeting room with windows and sunlight

Coffee, tea and water for the participants

In case of an online arrangement:

PC/laptop with a stable Internet connection, a computer microphone, headphones and a working camera for every focus group participant

Virtual whiteboard (software required)

Connections and equipment should be tested at least twice prior to the meeting: 1) two days prior to the meeting and 2) half an hour before the start of the meeting

Suggested Format of the Focus Group

The following format for the focus groups is recommended:

Introduction 5-10 minutes

The moderators introduce themselves, as well as the context, the overall aim and the expected results of the focus group, and presents the ground rules for its implementation.

27 Importantly, if there is no audio recording from the focus group discussion, the written notes and the focus group report should be as detailed as possible.

These might include:

a) Participants are informed that audio of the meeting is being recorded[28] and/or written notes are being taken. These will not be made public and will be used only to ensure that the participants' opinions are adequately and truthfully reflected in subsequent analyses and reports.

b) In those cases, where a Participants list is required, participants should be reminded of this. The list will be safely stored by the organizers of the focus group meetings for not more than two years.

c) Participants are reminded that they have consented to participating in the focus group but might discontinue their participation at any moment, without any negative inferences or consequences[29].

d) There are no right or wrong answers. It is important not to be critical of anyone. Participants are welcome to disagree, they should make sure to address the issue, not the person.

e) Participants are invited to speak one at a time, respecting each other's time and opinions, taking this opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions freely.

f) Participants are invited to raise any issues they might have, so the organizers and the moderator can address them before starting the discussion.

Segments of discussion

- Online meeting: the focus group takes place without an interruption – if there is a break, there is a risk that some participants might not return. However, in case of a lively discussion, a short five-minute break is admissible. Participants are invited to stay connected.

- In person meeting: Segment 1 lasts 45 minutes, followed by a 15-minute break and another 45 minutes-long Segment 2.

It is up to the organizers/moderators of the focus group to adapt the contents of each segment to the specificities and interests of the participants. In cases where the group is more active (or it seems that some participants know each other), the moderator may immediately proceed to the discussion of the prepared questions. In those cases, where the participants are more hesitant to engage in a conversation, a round of introductions or a more general discussion might be useful.

We suggest that the focus group discussion is provisionally divided into two sections, even when no break is planned. The first section focuses on key developments, achievements, and best practices linked to efforts countering DGBV in Bulgaria. During

28 Only if consent has been acquired from all participants when they filled in their consent forms.

29 This is especially valid and should be stressed upon in case of victims.

the second section, participants are asked to concentrate on existing challenges to successfully countering DGBV and legislation and policy gaps that need to be addressed. In the beginning of each section, the moderator may ask the focus group participants to write down respectively the three greatest achievements and the three greatest challenges when it comes to DGBV in Bulgaria. This could ensure a smoother development of the debate.

Conclusion 5-10 minutes

The moderator wraps up the discussion, provides a summary and asks the participants whether the summary was adequate or something is missing. He/she asks the participants for final thoughts or comments. If there are any, the moderator addresses them and reminds the focus group members to refrain from disclosing information revealed in the meeting to people who are not present. The moderator thanks the participants for their participation and valuable input.

Main Types of Participants in the Focus Groups[30]

A) Government and state authorities (two focus groups, 6-8 participants each) – policymakers and decision-makers, expert representatives of legislative, executive, and judicial powers

B) First responders (two focus groups, 6-8 participants each) – first responders, such as law enforcement officers, social service workers, healthcare professionals, psychologists, etc.

C) Academia and civil society representatives (two focus groups, 6-8 participants each) – researchers and professionals working on the field

D) Representatives of the private sector (two focus groups, 6-8 participants each) – representatives of advertising agencies, media and social media, businesses

Where mixed focus groups, i.e. ones involving experts from different backgrounds, are taking place, the monitoring team could use the questions proposed for Focus Group A and Focus Group B, and include tailored questions from Focus Group C and Focus Group D, depending on the representation achieved in any given focus group, ensuring that equitable speaking time is afforded to all participants.

Suggested questions

Below we recommend some questions to be addressed during the focus group discussions. However, the debate should not be limited by these questions, if and when the group is ready and eager to provide insights on topics beyond those identified below. Moreover, the questions should be reviewed, and if necessary revised, based on the

30 Stakeholders may be added from the list of stakeholders

results of the desk research and/or the semi-structured interviews, if these are taking place simultaneously, especially when the latter identifies missing data and/or incomplete information. Where possible, focus group participants should be encouraged to fill in specific data gaps.

Focus group A (Government and state authorities)

1. Please write down and discuss: i) the three biggest achievements and ii) the three biggest challenges and/or gaps in efforts countering DGBV in Bulgaria experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time) with respect to (but not limited by) the following:

a) Legislation adopted to address DGBV, including relevant definitions

b) Policies and strategies adopted to address DGBV

c) Financial, human, logistical, and other resources

d) International cooperation – projects, programs, initiatives

e) Data gathered on the phenomenon of DGBV

f) Training and education programs for experts and professionals

g) Prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures

h) National coordination efforts and cooperation between institutions

i) Monitoring and evaluation measures

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the moderator to guide the discussion. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and/or the semi-structured interviews, if these are taking place simultaneously, but some examples are provided below:

- *What gap in efforts to counter DGBV was filled by the newest legislation and/or policy?*
- *Which significant gaps remain to be addressed? What is the way to achieve this?*
- *What, if anything, is still missing from current definitions related to DGBV?*
- *What type of data is most difficult to collect? What could be done to fill this gap?*
- *What topics touched upon during trainings and education programs were described as most useful? What topics are still missing from these trainings and programs?*
- *How would you describe the balance between prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures? Is any area overlooked at the expense of another (others)?*
- *What can be done to improve the cooperation between state and local institutions?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

Focus group B (First responders)

1. Please write down and discuss i) the three biggest achievements and ii) the three biggest challenges and/or gaps in efforts countering DGBV in Bulgaria experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time) with respect to (but not limited by) the following:

a) Financial, human, logistical, and other resources – including number and location of service centres and shelters, number of available places, capacity of hotlines, etc.

b) Perceptions about the phenomenon of DGBV and related topics: discrimination against women, gender (in) equality, etc.

c) Data gathered on DGBV

d) Training and education programs designed for first responders

e) Prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures

f) Cooperation between institutions

g) Cooperation between institutions, the non-governmental sector and the private sector

h) Differences between the application of DGBV counter-measures at national and local level

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the moderator to guide the discussion. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and/or the semi-structured interviews, if these are taking place simultaneously, but some examples are provided below:

- *How can the capacity of shelters and service centers be increased or optimized?*
- *What best practices in the work of first responders can you share? What are the challenges, if any, before applying these practices elsewhere/everywhere in the country?*
- *What is the dominant perception about DGBV in Bulgaria? How does this perception affect your work?*
- *What type of data is most difficult to collect? What could be done to fill this gap? How could first responders contribute to the gathering of such data?*
- *What topics touched upon during trainings and education programs were described as most useful? What topics are still missing from these trainings and programs?*
- *How would you describe the balance between prevention, protection, prosecution and compensation measures? Is any area overlooked at the expense of another (others)?*
- *What can be done to improve the cooperation among state and local institutions?*
- *What can be done to improve the cooperation between institutions, the non-governmental sector and the private sector?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

Focus group C (Academia and civil society representatives)

1. Please write down and discuss i) the three biggest achievements and ii) the three biggest challenges and/or gaps in efforts countering DGBV in Bulgaria experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time) with respect to (but not limited by) the following:

a) Legislation adopted to address DGBV, including relevant definitions

b) Policies and strategies adopted to address DGBV

c) Financial, human, logistical, and other resources

d) Data gathered on the phenomenon of DGBV and relevant research

e) Prevention, protection, prosecution, and compensation measures

f) Cooperation between state and local authorities and the non-governmental sector

g) Cooperation between the non-governmental sector, media and businesses

h) Perceptions about the phenomenon of DGBV and related topics: discrimination against women, gender (in)equality, etc.

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the moderator to guide the discussion. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and/or the semi-structured interviews, if these are taking place simultaneously, but some examples are provided below:

- *What gap in efforts to counter DGBV was filled by the newest legislation and/or policy?*
- *Which significant gaps remain to be addressed? How can this be achieved?*
- *What, if anything, is still missing from current definitions of DGBV?*
- *What type of data is most difficult to collect? What could be done to fill this gap?*
- *How would you describe the balance between prevention, protection, prosecution and compensation measures? Is one of these areas overlooked at the expense of another (others)?*
- *What best practices in the area of cooperation between institutions and NGOs can you share? What are the challenges, if any, before applying these practices elsewhere/everywhere?*
- *What is the biggest gap in terms of DGBV research in Bulgaria? Why do you think such research is still missing?*
- *What are the specific features of the phenomenon of DGBV in Bulgaria? To what can these be attributed?*
- *What is the dominant perception about DGBV in Bulgaria? How is DGBV intertwined with issues like gender inequality and gender-based discrimination?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

Focus group D (Private sector representatives)

1.Please write down and discuss i) the three biggest achievements and ii) the three biggest challenges and/or gaps in efforts countering DGBV in Bulgaria experienced in the last three years (even if their roots lie further back in time) with respect to (but not limited by) the following:

a) Legislation, policies, and strategies adopted to address DGBV

b) Cooperation between state and local authorities and media and businesses

c) Perceptions about the phenomenon DGBV and related topics: discrimination against women, gender equality, etc.

d) Significant and influential public awareness campaigns and initiatives at local, national and international level

i) Data gathered on the phenomenon of DGBV

e) Media coverage of the phenomenon of DGBV

As a general recommendation, the questions in Section 3 of the monitoring methodology could be used by the moderator to guide the discussion. More specific questions will be added following the desk research and/or the semi-structured interviews, if these are taking place simultaneously, but some examples are provided below:

- *How would you evaluate, from the standpoint of your business, the newest legislation and/or policy related to DGBV? In case you are not familiar with it, do you consider this an omission?*

- *How can your company contribute to the gathering of relevant data on DGBV?*

- *What best practices in the area of cooperation between institutions, the non-governmental sector and the private sector can you share? What are the challenges, if any, before applying these practices elsewhere/everywhere?*

- *What is your opinion on the way cases of DGBV are covered by Bulgarian media? If it needs to be improved, how can this be achieved?*

- *What are the elements/components of a successful public awareness campaign on DGBV? Please give an example of such a campaign (if not in Bulgaria, then in another country)?*

- *What is the dominant perception about DGBV in Bulgaria? How is DGBV intertwined with issues like gender inequality and gender-based discrimination?*

2. Please discuss anything else you might consider relevant

Focus Group Discussion Report

Suggested length of the document: 5-6 pages

1. Participant list

2. Executive Summary (1-2 paragraphs)

3. Key Findings (2-3 pages following the order of the questions given above)

4. General observations about the participants: Were the participants actively participating in the discussions? Which topics were especially interesting to them? Which topics were not? Did the participants pinpoint any important topics missing? If yes, which ones?

5. Recommendations by the participants *(if any, 1 page, as the recommendations are summarised and grouped in categories, for instance Recommendations related to prevention, Recommendations related to International cooperation, etc.)*

Appendix V: Informed Consent Form

I agree to participate in the (name of the project) project conducted by (name of person/principal researcher) from the (name of institution) in (place where the institution is located).

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project orally and through a Project Description in plain language, and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as a focus group participant/an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear. I have had the opportunity to ask and have answered any questions I may have had about this project before agreeing to participate.

2. My participation as a focus group participant/an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.

3. Participation involves participating in a focus group discussion/being interviewed. Focus groups are expected to last from 40 to 120 minutes, depending on their format, while the interview will last approximately 60 minutes. I do/do not allow the researcher(s) to audio record [mark as appropriate] during the interview/focus group. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview/focus group and dialogue to be audio-recorded, I am fully entitled to refuse, and/or to withdraw from participating in the interview/focus group.

4. I have the right not to answer questions and if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the focus group/interview, I have the right to withdraw from the focus group/interview.

5. Uses of records and data related to the focus group discussions/interviews will be subject to the [name of institution]'s data protection and management policy.

6. I have been given the guarantee that this research project has been reviewed and approved according to the appropriate ethical rules guiding the work of the [name of institution]. For complaints or questions concerning ethics or data protection linked to the research project, please contact [name of principal researcher] at [email of principal researcher]. You may also contact the Data Protection mechanism of [name of institution] at [contact information of Data Protection mechanism].

7. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the researcher/interviewer.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

For further information, please contact: NAME and EMAIL of Principal Researcher from NAME OF INSTIUTION

Appendix VI: Section 8 of the Monitoring Indicators /Optional/

Section 8: Discrimination: factors and risks underlying DGBV

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible. Feel free to add any other information related to the general legislative and policy measures, which you consider relevant and verified.

Primary indicators

1. Legislative and policy measures specifically addressing factors that **heighten the risk of DGBV**

Clarification

For instance, an equality act or anti-discrimination legislation, legislation concerning firearms, etc.

2. **Reports or studies** that are commissioned or produced by the state

Clarification

These may focus on discriminatory stereotypes and structural barriers preventing women from enjoying full equality and freedom from violence

Secondary indicators

1. **Discussions/legislative work to amend legal provisions potentially discriminatory against women**

Clarification

These provisions might especially relate to the following: child or forced marriage, criminalisation of abortion, discriminatory evidentiary rules and procedures, laws that prevent or deter women from reporting gender-based violence, restrictive immigration laws.

2. **Efforts on the part of CSOs and private sector** (at the state's initiative and/or with state support) to prevent gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality. If yes, what are these efforts?

Clarification

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past year:

Clarification

"In the past year" denotes the most recent year that has ended, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be 2021. If data is not available for the most recent year that has ended, include any data available for the most recent year overall, but not for a year prior to the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, and data is not available for 2021, you may use data from the most recent year for which data is available between 2017 and 2020, but not prior to that.

1. Proportion of women who have **reported being discriminated against or harassed** in the past 12 months to the Commission for the Protection against Discrimination or courts

2. Gender Equality Index of Bulgaria for the past year (according to EIGE)

3. Number of **events organized by competent institutions** to raise awareness about the importance of equality between men and women and inform about the policies and measures undertaken by the various institutions in this regard

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Appendix VII: Section 9 of the Monitoring Indicators /Optional/

INTERSECTIONAL VULNERABILITIES RELATED TO DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE – A DISCUSSION

Risk of victimisation increases significantly, when women belong to more than one of similar disadvantaged groups, thus leading to intersectional vulnerability. Developments in feminist theory and related fields of research (Stubbs, 2015) have led to a more abstract and multi-dimensional approach to how vulnerability is formed through each individual's complex identity. Academics argue that there is a post-modern shift from static notions of inequality, which rely on one predominant trait in each individual (e.g. gender OR race, OR ethnicity, OR sexual orientation), to complex, dynamic, and changeable forms of inequality "which cannot be untangled to reveal a single cause" (Grabham et al., 2009, p.1) – i.e. the understanding of the interplay between different "protected categories" giving rise to different modulations of vulnerability. For the purposes of this methodology, however, we take intersectionality in both its theoretical, and practical manifestations. Therefore, it is a term that denotes the spectrum of traits that constitute a single human identity (including the perceptible traits that are not part of one particular woman's identity, but are assigned to her by the public nonetheless.[31] At the same time, intersectionality also engages with the real-life consequences, limitations, negative stereotyping, public perceptions, systemic barriers, etc. that occur from the identity-governance nexus.

Recognition of the role of multiple identity traits combining to increase vulnerability are not recent renditions. Eaton (1994) speaks of complex inequality as "intersectional oppression" that gives rise to unique and distinct discrimination. Intersectional vulnerability to DGBV has been long recognized by human rights bodies such as CEDAW, UN-OHCHR, EU-Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). This has prompted research and analysis into particular groups in the high vulnerability spectrum, such as children and the elderly (gender-age nexus), Roma women (gender-ethnicity), women with disabilities, migrant women, etc.

This section of the methodology aims to briefly shed some light on several category-to-category nexuses contributing to higher vulnerability such as gender-age, gender-disability, gender-social status, etc. Understanding intersectional vulnerability along the circumference of a multifaceted identity is crucial for grasping the essence of GBDV in Bulgaria, and thereby identifying gaps in legislation and regulation, as well as good practices that are or could be implemented. Groups of inherently high vulnerability in the particular national setting include children, Roma women and girls, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, sex workers, victims of human trafficking, etc. However, recent small-scale studies of DGBV among same-sex couples, elderly women, and women with physical, intellectual and psycho-social vulnerabilities, are indicative of violence forms and

31 As an example to illustrate the authors' point is the case of a woman who choses to dress in less "feminine" clothes and is often perceived as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, regardless of her actual self-assigned sexuality.

settings that must be further explored. Finally, new vulnerable groups are capable of arising from changed circumstances, leading to the need to engage with novel (at least for Bulgaria) and evolving forms of GBDV such as foreign-origin violence (e.g. FGM), or cyberviolence (from non-consensual pornography to deep fakes).

Section 9 of the Monitoring Indicators /Optional/

Section 9: Intersectional vulnerabilities

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible. Feel free to add any other information related to the general legislative and policy measures, which you consider relevant and verified.

1.Discussion of **intersectional vulnerabilities** in the legal, policy and strategic documents

Clarification

Provide an evaluation of how, if at all, intersectional vulnerabilities are addressed and discussed in the national framework

2. Factors of **vulnerability present** in the national legislation

Clarification

Factors may include the following: a) **age** *(minors (under 14 years of age), juveniles (14-18 years of age), above 55 years of age); b)* **ethnicity/ status** *(ethnic minorities, religious minorities, racial minorities; migrants and refugees); c)* **disability** *(physical disabilities, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities); d)* **sexuality and gender identity** *(individuals with a gender identity outside the sex binary (biological male and biological female) and the respective gender norms, and a sexual orientation outside the biological man to biological woman relations and the respective gender norms); e)* **social status** *(indigent populations, migrants and refugees); f)* **other specific groups** *(e.g. pregnant women, sex workers, victims of human trafficking, substance abusers, etc.)*

3. **Policies and measures** specifically designed for and targeted at individuals, experiencing different intersectional vulnerabilities

Clarification

Comment upon both state- and NGO-funded policies and measures. Such may include prevention campaigns among young girls, Roma women, refugee women, pregnant women etc.

4. **Intersectional vulnerabilities considered during court proceedings**

Clarification

This may entail their consideration in terms of establishing the circumstances of the crime (e.g. as aggravating circumstances) or in terms of the process as a whole (e.g. when giving testimonies and supporting victims, etc.).

5. **DGBV services designed to respond to intersecting oppressions**

Clarification

This refers to intersectional service delivery aimed at individuals that are negatively impacted by several intersecting oppressions.

6. **Vulnerable groups' perspectives and needs** considered when addressing intersectional vulnerability in state legislative and policy-making processes

Clarification

If yes, how? For instance, are representatives of these groups included directly in these processes?

7. Responsiveness of the current **legal, policy and strategic framework sufficiently responsive** to new developments in the field of DGBV

Clarification

This may include new types of vulnerabilities, new at-risk groups, and new types of violence (examples include: the effect of migration flows on the types of DGBV in a certain country, the modalities of violence in same-sex couples, cyberviolence and ICT-enabled violence)

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past five years: :

Clarification

"In the past five years" denotes the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be the 2017-2021 period. Please, include an aggregate number for the entire period, and use the "Overall assessment" field to identify any significant developments within that period, if necessary.

1. Number and categories of **vulnerabilities** covered by national law;

2. Number of **statistics sets or studies** on a national level (regardless of commissioning) that provide data on the risk of DGBV for any specific vulnerable group;

3. Number of **new types of DGBV** added in the relevant laws and/or in policy/ strategic documents;

4. Number of **relevant laws**, especially laws pertaining to vulnerable and/or minority groups and non-specific to DGBV, in which DGBV is included;

5. Number of **state-funded projects/programs/activities** by institutions and CSOs/NGOs targeting groups/individuals with intersectional vulnerabilities in relation to DGBV.

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

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Appendix VIII Section 10 of the Monitoring Indicators /Optional/

NEW TYPES OF GBV – A DISCUSSION

General Recommendation 35 of the CEDAW Committee acknowledges that violence against women arises from a vast number of factors, is experienced on grounds of a spectrum of characteristics and traits, and affects women and girls throughout their whole life cycle. GR 35 also notes that gender-based violence may occur in all spheres and spaces of human life and interaction – in public and in private, at work, in politics, sport, education and healthcare, etc., including in the digital realm (para 20). Practices focused around "virginity", female rites of passage, FGM, defenses of honor, forced marriage, and locality-specific forms of violence also persist around the world, continuously changing and transcending boundaries under the pressures of globalisation and the transnational movement of people. Intra-marital relations of coercion and oppression, occupying the seemingly impervious private sphere, are coming to the fore of policy dialogue through feminist activism and gender justice campaigns. All of those forms of violence may, in the context of Bulgaria, be grouped together under the category of "new" types of DGBV to denote both novel such stemming from the proliferation of ICT products, and such that are not historically characteristic to the Bulgarian environment.

Section 10 of the Monitoring Indicators /Optional/

Section 10: New types of GBV

Clarification

Framework assessment: Make sure to address the following questions in as much detail as possible. Feel free to add any other information related to the general legislative and policy measures, which you consider relevant and verified.

1. Discussion of **new types of DGBV** in the legal, policy and strategic documents

Clarification

Such new types may include hate speech and hate crime against women and/or based on gender, online and technology-facilitated violence, types of violence that are not characteristic to the national setting, such as FGM and crimes of honour, religion-related violence, etc.

2. **Criminalisation** of any of the types in point 1.

Clarification

If so, comment on the sanctions envisioned.

3. **Policies and measures** (both state- and NGO-funded) specifically designed for and targeted at addressing new types of violence

Clarification

Comment on both state- and NGO-funded policies and measures such as safe Internet campaigns, online risk-related trainings, trainings for first respondents, e.g. police and medical professionals, in identifying and reacting to cases of FGM/crimes of honour, etc.

4. Inclusion of special provisions on online and technology facilitated DGBV in **media and Internet related** legislation

Clarification

Comment on the availability of such provisions, as well as their practical implementation, if available.

5. Availability of **redress mechanisms** for individuals who have been victimised by online and technology facilitated DGBV

Clarification

Provide information on the character of these mechanisms, if such are identified, and their accessibility for victims.

6. Availability **significant studies and data collected** on new types of DGBV

Clarification

Comment on such studies and data commissioned or implemented by the state.

Clarification

Outputs and outcomes assessment: Include any available and reliable quantitative data for the time periods as defined in the table below. Clearly indicate the year, which the data pertains to in the provided space. Different indicators can include data from different years. Then, assisted by the questions in Level 2 above, provide a brief account of your perceptions and observations to support or clarify the quantitative data.

In the past five years:

Clarification

"In the past five years" denotes the most recent five-year period, e.g. if writing in 2022, that will be the 2017-2021 period. Please, include an aggregate number for the entire period, and use the "Overall assessment" field to identify any significant developments within that period, if necessary.

1. Number of **new types of DGBV** added in the relevant laws and/or in policy/ strategic documents;

2. Number of **statistics sets or studies** on a national level (regardless of commissioning) that provide data on the presence and/or frequency of new types of DGBV;

3. Number of **relevant laws**, especially laws pertaining to media and the Internet and non-specific to DGBV, in which DGBV is included;

4. Number of **state-funded projects/programs/activities** by institutions and CSOs/NGOs addressing the new types of DGBV or targeting victims of new types of DGBV.

Perceptions and observations:

Clarification

Overall assessment (max. 150 words): Summarise main findings, outlining key positive developments and gaps.

Appendix IX: Information about the Project

The project *Development of a monitoring methodology and conducting a national monitoring of policy and institutional practice in relation to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria* is funded by the Active Citizens Fund (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein Grants). It is implemented by "Positive Personal Skills in Society" Foundation ("PULSE" Foundation, Bulgaria, Coordinator), the Center for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria, Partner) and the Human Rights Academy (Norway, Partner) during the period 2019-2022.

The main purpose of the project is to evaluate existing policies and institutional practices in the field of domestic and gender-based violence, with the ultimate objective of their further develop and optimisation. It also aims to create tools for regular future use by the respective stakeholders that are currently unavailable at the national level. This is why, two major project outputs are a monitoring methodology for evaluating policies and institutional practices in relation to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria and a set of recommendations for improving policies on domestic and gender-based violence. The project is oriented mainly towards public institutions (on national and local level), as well as policy-makers, responsible for designing policies and institutional practices, related to domestic and gender-based violence in Bulgaria. The end users will be all those affected in any way by these phenomena, as well as those at risk.

Appendix X List of Potential Sources of Information

Bulgarian institutions

- Bar associations, prosecutors' and judges' unions and associations
- Courts of appeal and provincial and district courts
- Emergency medical care, forensic medicine and GPs
- Mayors of municipalities and specialized municipality units
- Ministry of Education and Science, Regional Departments of Education
- Ministry of Interior, General Directorate National Police, National 112 System Directorate, Regional Directorates of Interior for the respective district, Institute of Psychology - Ministry of Interior, Academy of the Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Justice, General Directorate Execution of Punishments, National Council for Assistance and Compensation to Victims of Crime, National Legal Aid Bureau
- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Social Assistance Agency, Regional Directorates "Social Assistance"
- National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Bulgaria
- National Institute of Justice, Bulgaria
- National Statistical Institute,
- Prosecutor's Office of Republic of Bulgaria, incl. regional and district prosecutor's offices
- Social services providers for victims of domestic violence (adults and children)
- State Agency for Child Protection, incl. regional and district units
- Supreme Administrative Court, incl. regional administrative courts
- Supreme Court of Cassation
- Supreme Judicial Council - Bulgaria, Directorate "Legal Affairs", Directorate "Information Technology and Judicial Statistics"

NGOs and media in Bulgaria

- "Open Society Institute" Foundation
- "Partners Bulgaria" Foundation
- "PULSE" Foundation

- Alliance for Protection against Gender-based Violence and its individual members - Non-governmental organisations
- Animus Association Foundation
- Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
- Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives
- Center for Legal Aid - Voice in Bulgaria
- Center for the Study of Democracy
- Media articles and analyses on the topic of domestic and gender-based violence
- Other NGOs providing services to women and children victims of violence
- Research on domestic and gender-based violence by statistical and research agencies
- Traditional and online media, incl. social media

International institutions and organisations

Reports, recommendations, statistics and analyses by the following organisations, institutions, etc.:

- Case law and advisory opinions of the European Court of Human Rights and international specialised courts
- CEDAW Committee
- Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe
- EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- Eurobarometer
- European Institute for Gender Equality
- Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe (GREVIO)
- International Labour Organization
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- The World Bank
- The World Health Organization
- UN Population Fund
- UN Women

DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN BULGARIA

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The scale, frequency, and intensity of gender-based and domestic violence pose a problem for many countries and societies around the world. Significant effort is being put into devising comprehensive strategies and efficient policies to tackle these phenomena. However, much is yet to be achieved, especially in terms of collection and analysis of relevant data, supporting gender equality, and encouraging women empowerment. Bulgaria is no exception, a fact exacerbated by its failure to ratify the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*.