

## Scanning Security Sector Institutions for Their Gender Responsiveness

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In order to respond to the need for integrating gender into security sector reform (SSR) training, policies and programs, several different gender mainstreaming<sup>i</sup> initiatives have been attempted. The application, monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives are important. There are different ways to apply a systematic approach to integrating gender into SSR programs and initiatives. One good way to start the transformation of the security sector toward greater gender sensitivity and responsiveness is to audit and assess security sector institutions<sup>ii</sup> themselves on their applied gender dimension, balance and mainstreaming efforts. This paper is based on one of the tools of a forthcoming jointly developed toolkit by DCAF, ODIHR and UN INSTRAW on gender and security sector reform analysing the integration of gender into SSR assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

### **How and why should gender assessments/audits be applied on security sector institutions?**

In the context of gender, on the one hand, and SSR approaches on the other the term of auditing and assessing is often used for different types of analysis. Auditing the security sector and its institutions varies from gender evaluation, audits and assessments. Gender audits provide a means of analysing gender issues at the level of policy, structure, budgets and personnel, including people's perceptions and understandings of gender in their own institutions but also on the equal participation in decision making processes. Specific gender audits and assessments can therefore serve as both a starting point as well as an evaluation and self-assessment of ongoing gender mainstreaming activities. InterAction defines the purpose of the *Gender Audit* as being "to identify areas of strength and achievement, innovative policies and practices, as well as continuing challenges as a foundation for gender action planning."<sup>iii</sup> Furthermore, there are audits, analysis and assessments of security institutions, countries, contexts and programmes from a gender and/or security perspective applying different methods. Gender audits and assessments of security sector institutions not only depend on a clear definition and research objective, but overall on the cooperation and political will of the specific institution. Obstacles such as the possible lack of transparency of security institutions such as the military, intelligence services and prisons may appear as a challenge to overcome before starting the gender audit and assessment. Still, gender audits are a good first step for an organisation that has not worked specifically on gender before as it allows for introspection, participatory planning and organisational learning. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that these assessments focus, "on improving the performance of an organisation with regards to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment."<sup>iv</sup> In order to respond to security needs, threats and perceptions of security of all citizens of society (men, women, boys and girls) differences, roles and dynamics between and of the different gender dimensions must be taken into account.

An analysis of the judicial system in Kosovo for example shows and emphasises the need to analyse the integration of women's issues into the courtroom in order to create just and effective legal institutions in a post-conflict scenario.<sup>v</sup> Analysing how the institution in question applies gender mainstreaming methods serves the effectiveness and efficiency of the specific institution. Result and aim of such assessment can be the creation of a systematic action plan on how to further

integrate a gender perspective into all spheres of the operation and programs, starting with recruitment procedures<sup>vi</sup>, gender training and gender sensitive policies and infrastructure articulating a gender vision and goals on how to achieve gender equality. An internal questionnaire, which will be filled out by staff if possible, participatory workshops and individual in-depth interviews, will help policy makers understand:

- The extent to which gender-related concepts and policies are understood by personnel at different levels of the organisation
- Technical capacity of the organisation, including existing gender expertise, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation
- Institutional culture and potential biases that result in discrimination against women workers, partners or beneficiaries.

### **Methodologies and application**

Gender audits and assessments can be conducted either by an internal team or external evaluators<sup>vii</sup>. There are different advantages and disadvantages for either strategy. Internally conducted audits may be cheaper and easier to realise, especially taking into account security sector institutional hierarchies, structure and internal procedures. An examination by an external consultant on the other hand may guarantee more independence of the study via an “outside perspective”. Inter-departmental working groups in cooperation with external consultants such as gender experts or women’s organisations may take both perspectives into account, but may require more time and resources.

Methods used by the defined examination team or consultant can either focus on a self-assessment strategies analysing people’s perceptions within the institution or apply more objective data such as analysing the outcomes, outputs, procedures and processes inside the organisation. The latter implies a good knowledge about the processes, aims, objectives and mandate of the institution. A combination between such self-assessment and procedural evaluation promises to deliver a more complete picture as the application of only one of these strategies.

Objective and aspects of such assessment of a specific security sector institution include the assessment of:

- Political Will
- Technical Capacity
- Accountability
- Organisation Structure

A review of organisational policies, programs and staff helps reflecting the institutional infrastructure with respect to gender. A participatory process and the emphasis on a learning and information sharing process integrate the various necessary perspectives of security personnel. In order to gain the relevant data, methods such as questionnaires and focus-group based planning processes help to gain knowledge about internal perceptions of gender issues.

A combination of quantitative data collection and qualitative analysis provides an opportunity to crosscheck indicators<sup>viii</sup> and results. It is crucial to maintain consistency between methodological tools and the implementation of different methods through the iterative process. Small group surveys, questionnaires and other forms of data collection need to be systematically and strategically applied to discussion results and planning further action. Possible questions and assessment objectives could concern issues such as equal representation of women on all

institutional levels, creating gender-friendly working environments, gender training and gender focal points.

**Suggested questions for reviewing policies and gender responsiveness:**

- How do gender relations, equalities or inequalities and dynamics in the specific context and institution shape policies?
- Is there equal representation of men and women at all levels of the organisation?
- How gender sensitive are recruitment policies and procedures (theoretically and on a practical level)?
- What policies are in place to prevent and address sexual harassment, discrimination and violence? Do gender units, working groups or focal points exist?
- Are personnel trained on sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, gendered security needs and vulnerabilities and women's rights as well as other gender-related aspects of their work?
- What training has been done or is needed in order to respond effectively to gender and security matters?
- What gender mainstreaming initiatives have been adopted so far?
- How much investment and priority is given to gender issues in terms of financial, human and other resources?
- Is sex- and age-disaggregated data used for assessments, evaluations and investigations of security matters?
- How could further monitoring mechanisms within the institutions include a systematic, gender-sensitive perspective?
- What is needed for further improvement of the gender responsiveness of the institution?
- What indirect barriers are there, such as language, institutional infrastructure and masculinity issues?
- How can implemented gender mainstreaming initiatives be monitored, followed up on and evaluated?<sup>ix</sup>

**Action Plans: Putting results of reviews and reflection into practice**

The development of systematic and integrative action plans help to clarify and strategically apply gender-mainstreaming efforts.<sup>x</sup> The integration of a gender perspective into all institutional and operational spheres is facilitated through such plans, which can be presented through other documents, such as policy papers or discussion forums. An example of a gender action plan after assessing security matters internally and externally through a gender lens of an international security organisation provides the action plan on gender mainstreaming of the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs<sup>xi</sup>. Defining goals, inputs, outputs, outcomes and necessary activities in order to achieve the set goals and impact are a central part of the skeleton of such plan or policy paper. Using approaches such as result based management techniques<sup>xii</sup> allow to establish clear policy circles and monitoring mechanisms. The inclusion and active integration of gender issues into further monitoring, analysis, review and evaluation tools are important next steps for a gender responsive SSR process. Gender-sensitive indicators<sup>xiii</sup> within result chains, policy frameworks or other monitoring mechanisms help to achieve sustainable gender-sensitive security provisions by the mandated institutions.

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<sup>i</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Agreed Conclusions on Gender Mainstreaming" (Geneva: UN ECOSOC, 1997)

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<sup>ii</sup> For definition and classifications of the different security sector institutions please see: OECD DAC, 2005, pp. 20-21. Also see; Heiner Hänggi, "Making Sense of Security Sector Governance," *Challenges of Security Sector Governance*, eds. Heiner Hänggi and Theodor H. Winkler (Geneva: DCAF, 2003).

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.interaction.org/caw/services.html#Audit>

<sup>iv</sup> Rubin, Deborah; Missokia, Elizabeth; "Gender Audit for USAID/Tanzania", United States Agency for International Development for the United States Government, 2006, p. 25.

<sup>v</sup> Corrin, Chris "Gender Audit of Reconstruction Programme in South Eastern Europe", The Urgent Action Fund and The Women.s Commission for Refugee Women and Children", New York, 2000, p. 6.

<sup>vi</sup> As one example for analyzing recruitment barriers in the Northern Ireland police see: Hillyard, Paddy; McWilliams, Monica; Ward, Margaret "Northern Ireland Gender Audit", Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster and Democratic Dialogue, 2006, p. 30.

<sup>vii</sup> Moser, Caroline; "An Introduction to Gender Audit Methodology: Its design and implementation in DFID Malawi" (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2005)

<sup>viii</sup> Tony Beck, "Using Gender-Sensitive Indicators: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders" (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005).

<sup>ix</sup> Suggested questions in a virtual discussion conducted by DCAF, ODHIR and UN INSTRAW. See also Valasek, Kristin; "UNDP/DCAF Handbook for CSO for Security Sector Oversight" (forthcoming)

<sup>x</sup> Valasek, Kristin; "Securing Equality, Engendering Peace", (Santo Domingo: UN INSTRAW, 2006)

<sup>xi</sup> United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs, "Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan", (DDA, 2003)

<sup>xii</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, "RBM Handbook on Developing Results Chains", Results-Based Management Division, Canadian International Development Agency, 2000

<sup>xiii</sup> Tony Beck, "Using Gender-Sensitive Indicators: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders" (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005).