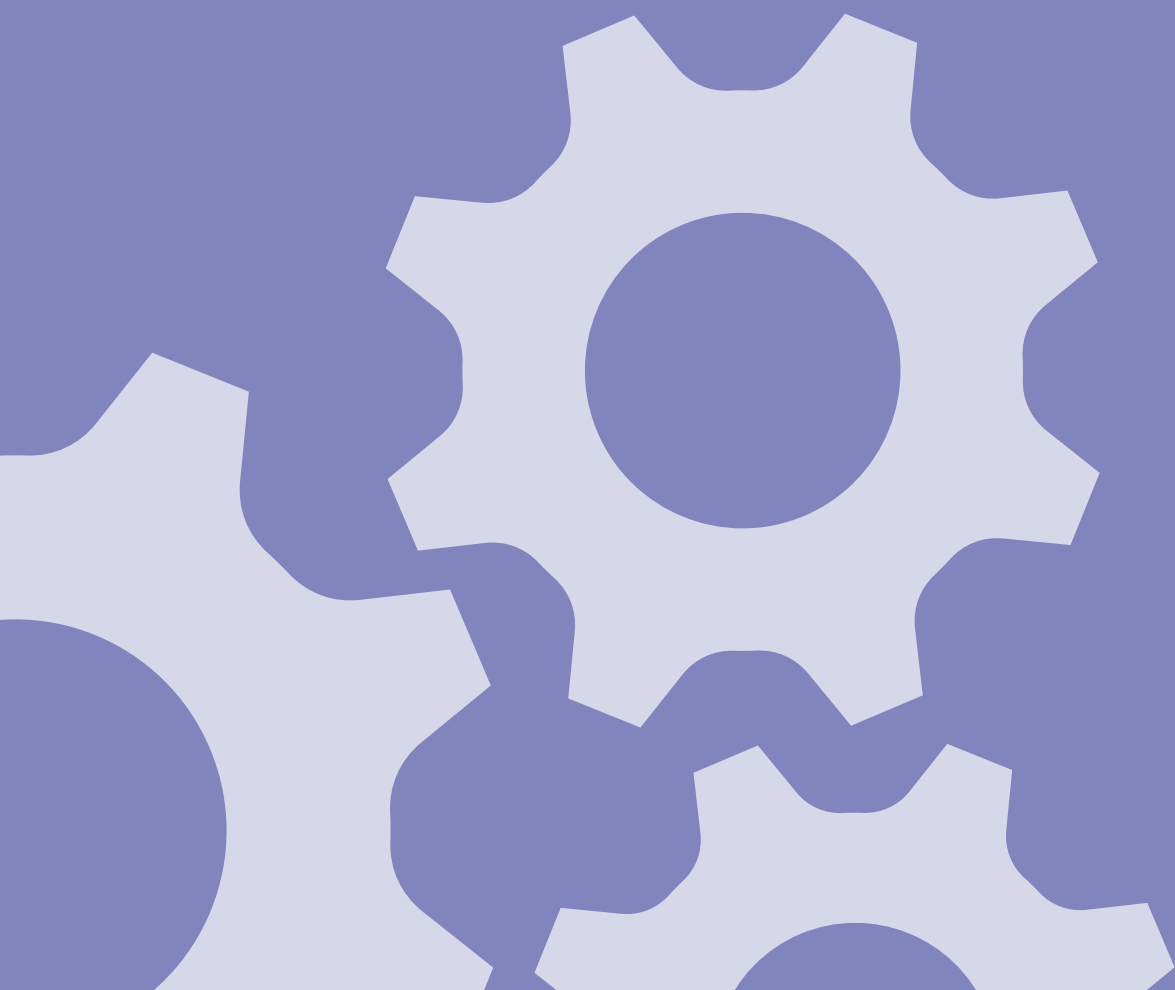

Guidelines for OSCE Staff

Needs Assessments in the Field of SSG/R

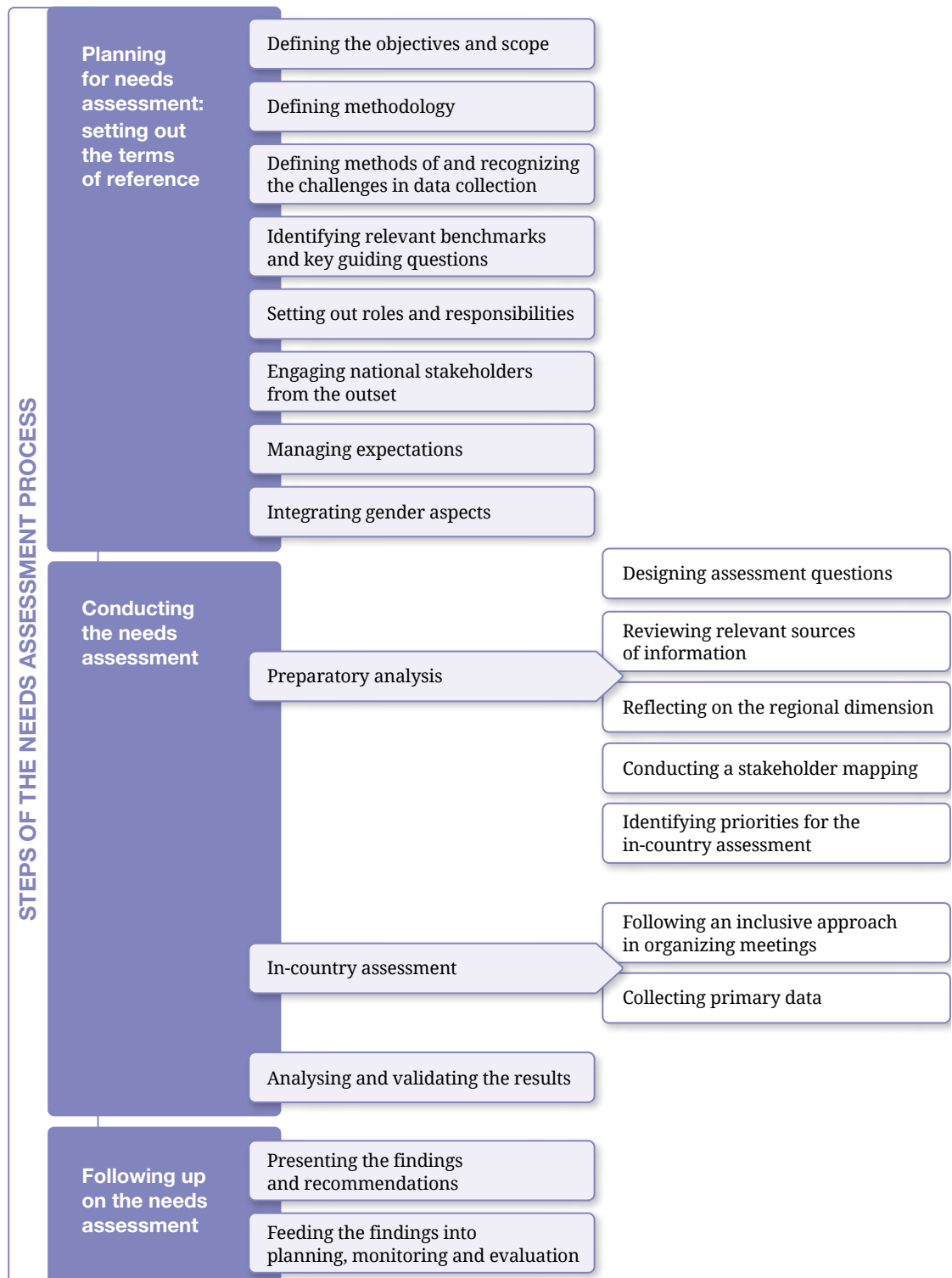


Executive Summary

The chapter provides an overview on the rationale, typology, functions and added value of needs assessments (section 1); outlines and describes main steps in the planning (section 2) and conducting needs assessments (section 3); and discusses the follow-up process to needs assessments (section 4). Finally, a practical checklist is provided to help staff in the process (section 5).

Key points from the chapter:

- **Apply a comprehensive approach in all SSG/R-related needs assessments:** Any needs assessment conducted in the area of SSG/R must be guided by a comprehensive approach, even if the assessment only focuses on one security sector institution or one thematic area (e.g., policing, anti-corruption, etc.). A comprehensive approach in this regard includes examining the extent to which the security sector is effective, accountable, inclusive and responsive; evaluating how much it operates within the framework of democratic governance and human rights; identifying the synergies between related subsectors; and collecting the perceptions of beneficiaries. Inclusivity is also required by involving a diverse set of stakeholders, including representatives of relevant security institutions, oversight actors, civil society, international actors and OSCE staff (as applicable) in all three dimensions of security.
- **Ensure national ownership:** National ownership requires engagement with national stakeholders from the very outset on the assessment's objectives, its scope, the implementation process and the subsequent handling of findings.
- **Mainstream gender and human rights:** Gender and human rights need to be effectively mainstreamed throughout the assessment by ensuring that the assessment team is not only gender-balanced but also that it possesses gender and human rights expertise, and the assessment contains a gender analysis. Moreover, the data collected must be disaggregated by sex, age and population groups (e.g., minorities), and efforts must be made to understand the differing circumstances, needs and perceptions of women, men, boys and girls. More broadly, the assessment should examine the roles of both duty-bearers (the security sector) and rights-holders (the beneficiaries).
- **Maximize the effectiveness of the needs assessment:** Adequate planning and implementation are essential to success. With regard to needs assessments, this includes clarifying the methodology, the roles and responsibilities of the assessment team and the co-ordination mechanism across all three OSCE dimensions. To maximize effectiveness, assessment teams must define the methods of data collection, recognize related challenges and manage expectations. Moreover, the assessment should be based on a situation, stakeholder and problem analysis that draws both on desk research and in-country data collection and interviews. The findings of the assessment should also be validated with national counterparts and adequately fed into OSCE project and programme planning.

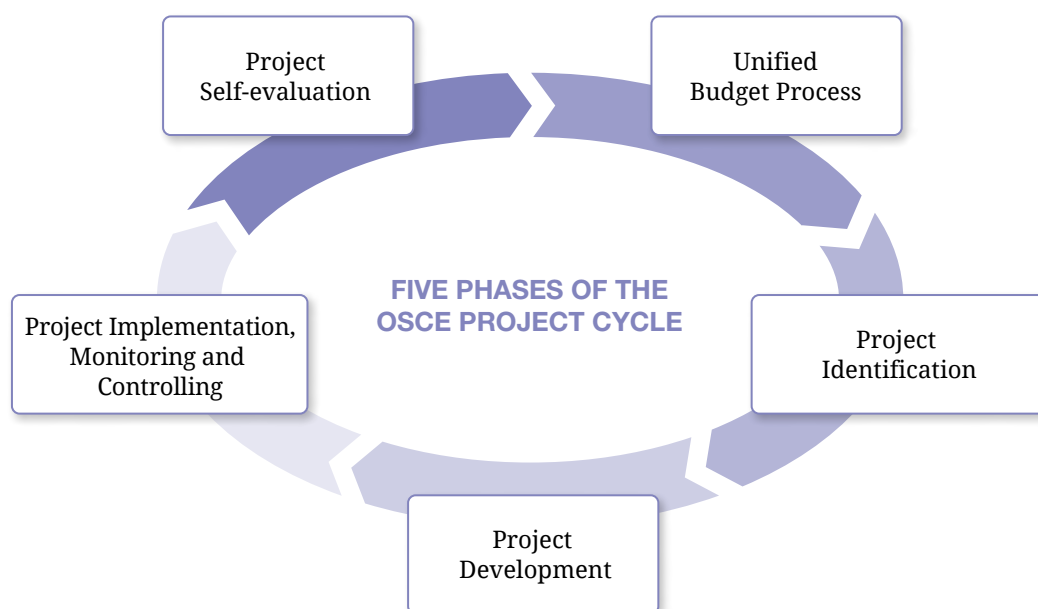
Figure 1: The needs assessment process

1. Rationale

A comprehensive needs assessment is of critical importance and essential added value for programmatic engagement and project activities by the OSCE and must be part of strategic planning. Therefore, this chapter provides practical guidance on how to conduct needs assessments in the field of SSG/R as part of project design, building on the OSCE Project Management Manual.¹

Needs assessments are part of the strategic planning, which is used to determine priorities, to strengthen programme and project design, to improve decision-making and subsequently to enhance monitoring and evaluation. They are an integral element of the identification phase of the project cycle.

Figure 2: Five phases of the OSCE project cycle²

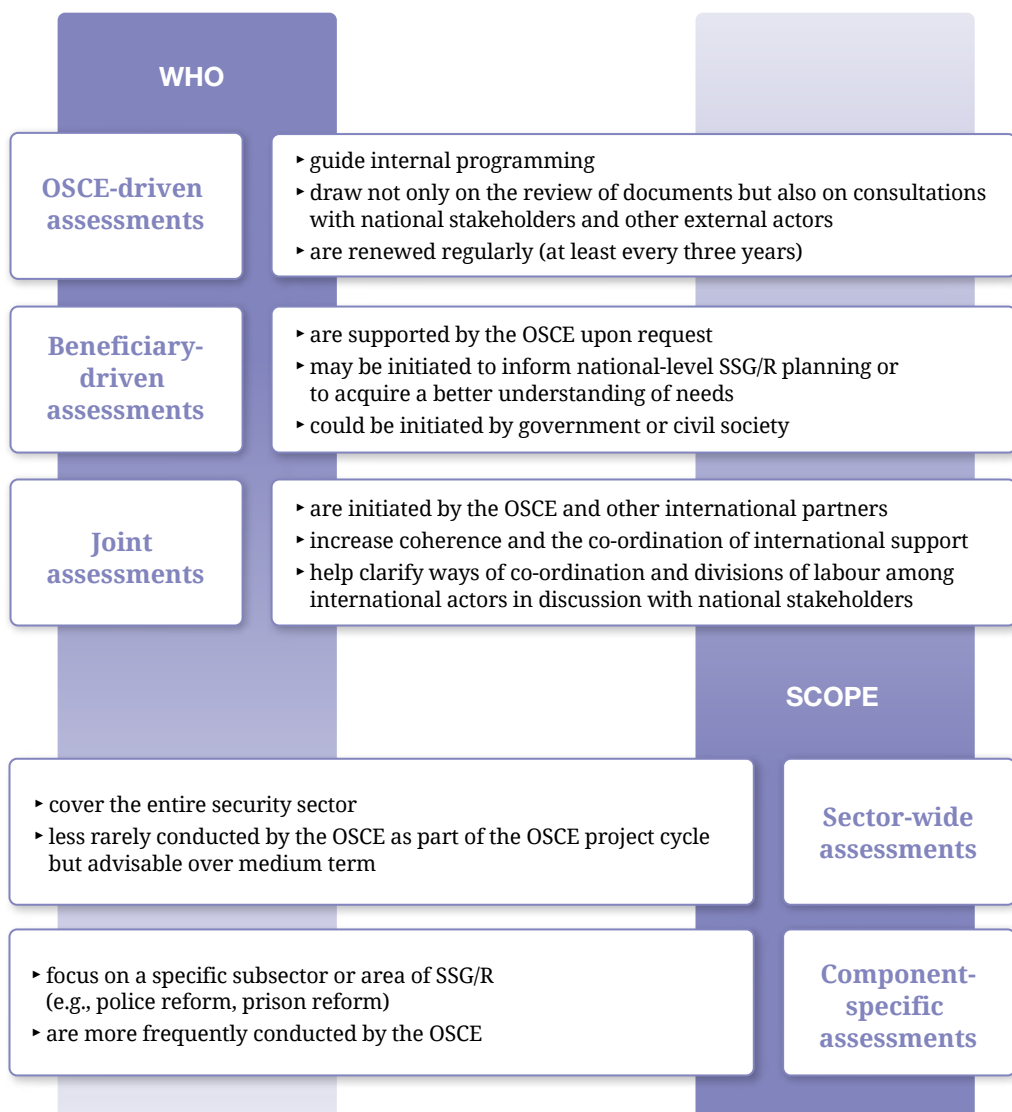


1 OSCE, *Project Management in the OSCE: A Manual for Programme and Project Managers* (Vienna, 2010).

2 Ibid., p. 7.

Needs assessments help OSCE programme/project managers to understand a variety of factors – notably, the national priorities of reform processes, the context in which the programme/project will take place; the different stakeholders; their interests, expectations and challenges; and the strategic options to address challenges. A thorough assessment of these elements will facilitate sustainable and results-oriented approaches to SSG/R support.³

Figure 3: Types of SSG/R needs assessments



3 See the chapter “Results-Oriented Programming in the Field of SSG/R”.

Needs assessments have different functions and provide important added value to different processes:

- **Supporting national reform processes:**

Needs assessments provide empirical evidence of gaps, thereby justifying the establishment of priorities. They enable the OSCE to deliver tailor-made advice to national stakeholders on reform priorities. At the same time, national authorities may directly use the results of the needs assessment by feeding them into their own decision-making processes, especially when such a needs assessment is commissioned or supported by national stakeholders.

- **Facilitating more effective OSCE programming by contributing to:**

- *Stronger engagement with national stakeholders.* Strong engagement with national stakeholders, including civil society, facilitates sustainable and results-oriented programming that is grounded in national needs.
- *The identification of entry points for relevant support.* Needs assessments identify gaps that should be filled and thus ensure that the support provided is demand-driven as opposed to supply-driven. Regular monitoring of ongoing engagement can feed into needs assessments and also informal needs assessments can help to ensure that OSCE support is routinely adapted to changing circumstances and requirements, thereby maintaining the relevance of OSCE support.
- *The identification of cross-dimensional approaches to SSG/R.* By examining the relationship and interlinkages between different components of the security sector, needs assessments help to plan comprehensive and holistic support.⁴
- *The early identification of risks and challenges.* Misconceived assumptions, unexpected resistance to reform processes, capacity limitations and other challenges might negatively affect the results expected. They may even contribute to an increase in existing tensions, despite the OSCE's good intentions. Needs assessments help to identify and mitigate such risks at an early stage.
- *Stronger co-operation with other international actors.* Included in needs assessments are consultations with other key international actors, who are engaged in supporting the security sector, in order to identify gaps, ensure co-ordination and avoid duplication of efforts. Early engagement with international actors helps to identify potential areas for co-operation in a timely manner.

4 See the chapter [“Cross-Dimensional Approaches to SSG/R”](#).

- **Providing baseline data for subsequent planning, monitoring and evaluation efforts:**

A common challenge in the area of SSG/R is the lack of baseline data for outputs and outcomes, against which to measure progress and the achievement of targets. Baseline data is necessary to measure the result and impact of the support provided and it is also a requirement of OSCE project proposals. Needs assessments help to collect and analyse relevant data and to provide the necessary information to establish baselines. This information can therefore be used to support the development of results frameworks. Data may be obtained from relevant analytical studies, research, national policy documents, statistics, interviews, surveys or relevant civil society sources. This data can subsequently inform both national and international monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts.⁵



5 See also the [section 4.2](#) below.

2. Planning the Needs Assessment: Defining the Terms of Reference

The planning process should start by defining the methodology to be used and determining the general framework and objectives of the needs assessment. It is important to engage with national stakeholders during the planning phase in order to ensure that they can help in shaping the assessment to their needs. Engaging national stakeholders in this phase also increases their commitment to implement the recommendations arising from the assessment. A key output of the planning phase is the development of **terms of reference** and agreement on them with national stakeholders.

Info Box 1



Terms of reference should summarize the following:

- Objectives and the scope of the assessment
- Methodology
- Key benchmarks and guiding questions for the assessment
- Roles, responsibilities and composition of the assessment team
- Co-ordination mechanism for the team throughout the process
- Data sources and data collection methods
- Deliverables and indicative timelines
- Reporting modalities to disseminate the findings
- Budget (if applicable)

It is good practice to highlight in the terms of reference the need for a comprehensive, inclusive, gender-sensitive (incl. gender analysis) and people-centred approach to the conduct of the assessment, which will consider the needs of different groups of women, men, girls and boys. In the area of SSG/R, such an approach includes, for example, tailoring the methodology to include consultations not only with formal (state) security sector institutions but also with representatives of civil society and non-state security actors.⁶



For additional guidance and tips on planning an SSG/R needs assessment, see:

- DCAF/ISSAT (2010), *Operational Guidance Note: Planning a Security & Justice Assessment*
- FBA (2005), *SSR Assessment Framework*, Chapter 2 (Considerations at the Planning Stage), pp. 9–15

6 For more details, see the [section 3.2.1](#) below.

2.1 Defining the Objectives and Scope of the Assessment

OSCE staff should start by defining the overall objectives and scope of the assessment, as this will directly affect the timeline and the resources needed. Decisions are required as to whether the assessment will be broad (i.e., sector-wide) or limited to one or multiple subsectors. The objectives should be clear to all stakeholders involved.

In the context of SSG/R, one of the key purposes of a needs assessment is to take full account of the links between the various dimensions of security. In an ideal context, the OSCE would provide support based on a needs assessment of the entire security sector. In most cases, however, due to targeted intervention, limited time and resources, assessments will only focus on a subsector of the security sector, such as police services or the judicial system. In such cases, it is nevertheless important to reflect on elements of the broader security sector, which may need to be included in the assessment to obtain a complete picture of needs and priorities.⁷

Case Study



SSG/R Needs Assessment for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (I)

From October 2020 to February 2021, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre supported the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the conduct of a component-specific needs assessment, which focused on three thematic areas (**scope**): (1) integrity and anti-corruption in the security sector, (2) community security and community policing and (3) integrated border management. The assessment followed up on the mapping study “*OSCE Internal Mapping on Support Provided in the Area of SSG/R in Bosnia and Herzegovina*” published in 2019.

The **main objectives** of the assessment were to:

- ▶ Assess, in co-operation with the relevant authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the capacities, needs and priorities for national reform efforts in order to strengthen governance of the security sector in three selected priority areas;
- ▶ Inform future OSCE support on the basis of recommendations for whole-of-mission programmatic engagement (especially for UB and EXB programming from 2022 onward).

The **sub-objectives** of the needs assessment were to:

- ▶ Identify or assess potential entry points for the Mission (and other interested partners) to engage in more holistic support to national and local SSG/R process;
- ▶ Identify potential gaps and emerging needs in the SSG/R processes where there is an opportunity to provide support;
- ▶ Promote more holistic, whole-of-mission and cross-dimensional approaches to SSG/R.

7 For more examples, see the chapter “Cross-Dimensional Approaches to SSG/R”.

2.2 Defining the Methodology

Different methodologies are used to conduct needs assessments in the field of SSG/R. The choice of methodology will depend on the purpose, the financial and human resources available and the access to data. Some examples include:

- **The capacity, integrity and sustainability framework (institution-centred):** This framework identifies the capacity (effectiveness), integrity (accountability) and sustainability gaps of security sector institutions at the individual, organizational and external levels. This methodology helps to achieve a detailed understanding of the needs and opportunities of security institutions and to break them down into layers that allow targeted programming support. While institution-centred assessments help in understanding how to do things effectively and efficiently, they do not indicate whether these are the right things to do. Thus, the findings do not respond to key questions like: *Do the security services provided respond to the real security needs of the population?*

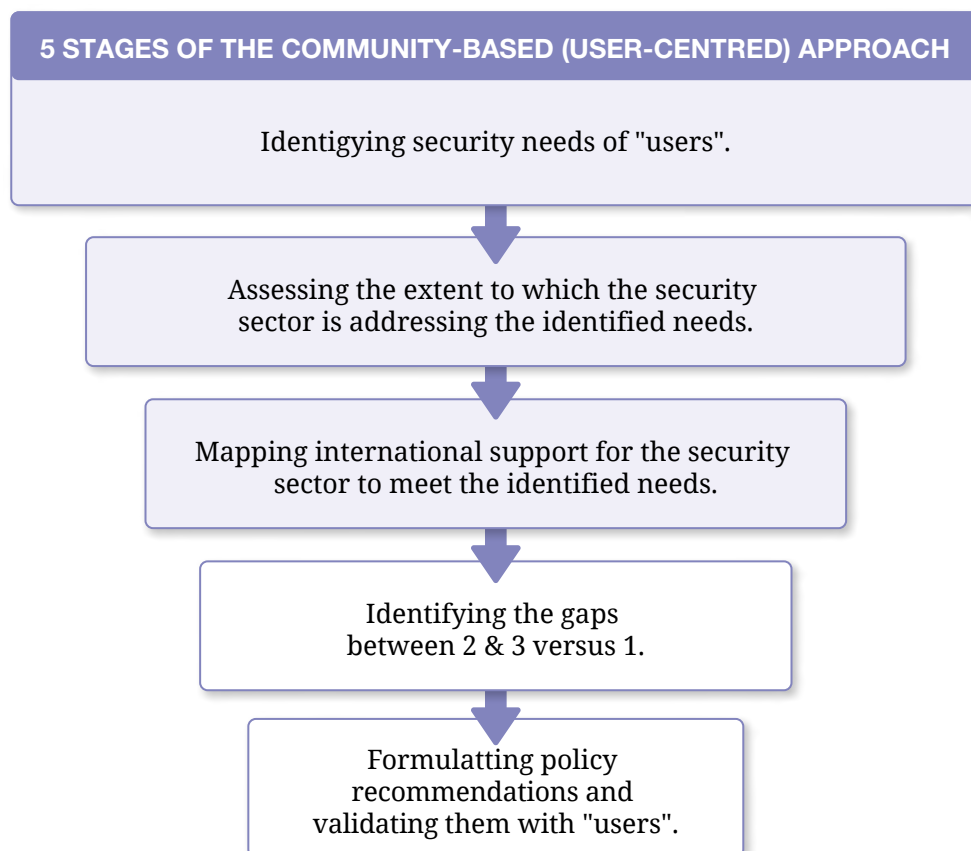
Figure 4: Capacity, integrity and sustainability framework⁸

	CAPACITY/ EFFECTIVENESS	INTEGRITY/ ACCOUNTABILITY	SUSTAINABILITY
INDIVIDUAL	Education Experience Aptitude	Human Rights Conduct Affiliation	Handover Performance Mentoring Ongoing Training
ORGANISATIONAL	Structures Resources Rules/Mandate	Representation Discipline Transparency	Maintenance Budget Auditing
EXTERNAL	National Strategies Management Bodies Cooperation	Formal Oversight Informal Oversight Independence	

8 DCAF/ISSAT, *Top 10 Programming Tools for Security and Justice Reform* (Geneva, 2015), p. 12.

- **The community-based approach (user-centred):** This type of assessment enables a better understanding of the security needs of the end-users, who are the people and communities in a given country. It also identifies the security institutions that should but do not respond to these needs. While this methodology enables the development of solutions that keep people at the centre of project/programme design, it may not always provide enough detailed information on the reasons behind the action (or inaction) of the security sector and, therefore, may overlook issues related to the sustainability of reforms.⁹

Figure 5: Five stages of the community-based (user-centred) approach



9 DCAF/ISSAT, *The Community-Based Approach to Criminal Justice Assessments* (Geneva, 2014).

Ideally, a mixed methodology should be applied, even if there are often time constraints and insufficient financial and human resources that hinder the assessment of all aspects. However, even when compromises need to be found, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities offered by the methodology selected.



For a detailed guidance on how to apply these two approaches, see:

- DCAF/ISSAT (2014), *A Community-Based Approach to Criminal Justice Assessments*
- DCAF/ISSAT (2015), *Using the Capacity, Integrity and Sustainability Framework*

Case Study



SSG/R Needs Assessment for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (II)

This needs assessment followed a user-centred approach, which focused on the security-related needs, problems, issues and experiences of the end-users – individuals and communities. At the core of the assessment, were the following questions:

- *What are the security needs of the population in relation to the three thematic areas outlined above?*
- *What are the specific needs of women, men, boys and girls in this regard?*
- *How effectively are the country's security sector institutions addressing these needs?*
- *What type of international support is already provided to security sector institutions to address the identified needs?*
- *What gaps exist between the security needs identified and the capacities of security sector institutions to address these needs? What gaps exist in the international support provided?*
- *How can the OSCE comprehensively support Bosnia and Herzegovina's security sector institutions to address the gaps identified in a sustainable fashion?*

When examining the institutional capacity to address the needs of individuals and communities, a particular emphasis was placed on accountability, oversight, gender equality and human rights. The methodology used reflected the OSCE's approach to SSG/R in that the security sector should be responsive to the security needs of all people and that SSG/R support should reflect needs of all segments of society, while integrating gender equality and human rights.

2.3 Defining the Methods and Recognizing Challenges in Data Collection

The terms of reference should set out the initial sources and methods for data collection, ideally consisting of a combination of public and internal data sources, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis methods relevant to the sector. Statistics and information collected about the sector and on perceptions of security among the population should always be disaggregated by sex and population groups (e.g., minorities).

Figure 6: Data collection methods

	QUALITATIVE METHODS A lot of data about a limited number of subjects: - limited generalization (low reliability) + understanding an issue in detail (high validity)	QUANTITATIVE METHODS Limited data about a lot of subjects: - Limited understanding of an issue in detail (low validity) + Generalization of results (high reliability)
PRIMARY SOURCES (sources containing original data that have not been interpreted)	• One-on-one (semi-structured) interviews • Focus groups (semi-structured) • Observations • Case studies	• Expert surveys • Public surveys • Official statistics • Structured observation
SECONDARY SOURCES (interpret, discuss or analyse original – primary – data)	• Documents analyses (records, reports, articles, books, etc.)	• Structured content analysis of documents (records, reports, articles, books, etc.)

Data collection, whether desk-based or field research, can be challenging, mainly because of the **accessibility and reliability of data**. Information related to the security sector is often considered sensitive, either because of national security concerns or because it is highly personal – for example, information on gender-based violence. Therefore, it is important to collect relevant publicly available data before requesting internal information. To build trust with respondents, clear assurances are required on how information will be stored and about how the findings of the needs assessment will be disseminated. When collecting data on sensitive issues, face-to-face interviews are often more appropriate than written questionnaires.

Empirical obstacles related to the reliability and accurate interpretation of quantitative data (e.g., crime statistics) also need to be recognized. To increase the reliability and effectiveness of the needs assessment, data sources need to be triangulated through both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. To increase the credibility of findings, challenges or shortcomings in collecting data must be included in the final assessment report so that the methodological limitations are made clear.



For an overview of data collection methods in project self-evaluation, see:

- ▶ OSCE (2010), *Project Management in the OSCE: A Manual for Programme and Project Managers*, section 12.8 on “Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation”

Case Study



SSG/R Needs Assessment for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (III)

This assessment employed three main methods of data collection:

1. During the preparatory desk research, the assessment teams used **documents analysis** to search for relevant primary and secondary data. This data came from the Mission’s programmatic documents (UB and EXB project proposals and evaluation/self-evaluation reports), relevant OSCE reports and publications, relevant reports by governmental and non-governmental bodies, relevant laws, national strategies and policy documents, as well as reports produced by civil society, academia and other international actors.
2. Document analysis was complemented by **focus group discussions** with relevant communities and **informal interviews** with relevant OSCE staff from both the Mission and the Secretariat.
3. During the in-country assessment, primary data and information was collected through **semi-structured interviews** with representatives of relevant national security sector institutions, academia and civil society, as well as with the international community. In total, almost 180 individuals were interviewed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most interviews were conducted by video-conference or by phone.

2.4 Setting Benchmarks and Developing Guiding Questions

Benchmarks can be used to identify the priorities to be examined during a needs assessment. While there is no consistent set of internationally recognized benchmarks for SSG/R, there is general agreement that the security sector should be both effective and accountable.¹⁰ Therefore, some of the key SSG/R benchmarks are related to effectiveness (e.g., adequate service delivery) and accountability (e.g., internal accountability and external oversight, respect for human rights and gender equality, etc.). Other benchmarks may, for example, relate to the capacity development needs of relevant institutions.

In some areas of SSG/R, specific international standards may exist that can be used to set benchmarks – for example, the UN’s Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women or the UN’s Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice. Key international and national commitments may also be used as benchmarks, such as levels of implementation of the UN SDGs or OSCE principles and commitments (e.g., derived from the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security), as well as evaluations and recommendations by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) or opinions of the Venice Commission. Other relevant national policy/action plans, such as for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, may also be of use.

To complement the benchmarks set and to specify in greater detail the issues that the assessment will focus on, the terms of reference should always include (preliminary) guiding questions for the assessment. The guiding questions need to be derived from the assessment’s scope. They can be formulated generically but should be specific enough to articulate what should be examined. They can be understood as “research questions” that will guide the work of the assessment team. When formulating the guiding questions, it may also be useful to consider the structure of the final report. In practice, the guiding questions may need to be refined during the assessment, once the first findings begin to emerge; however, they should not be changed fundamentally.

10 For more, see section 2.2 in the chapter “Understanding SSG/R in the OSCE Context”.

2.5 Establishing Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities need to be assigned, not only when the needs assessment is jointly conducted with other international actors or beneficiary-driven but also when the OSCE is in the lead. Roles and responsibilities should be assigned in four areas: (1) leading the assessment, (2) contributing to the assessment (human and financial resources), (3) collecting data and analysing it and (4) disseminating the results of the assessment.

In leading the assessment, this role could be filled internally within the OSCE or externally by a national or international expert. Regardless of who leads it, the assessment will likely require expert contributions from a number of OSCE Executive Structures and national stakeholders. Within the OSCE, roles and responsibilities may become blurred as expertise is often required in two or all three OSCE dimensions. Therefore, clarity is required on the institutional lead, who will co-ordinate expertise within the OSCE. A cross-dimensional perspective can be ensured by including representatives from the different OSCE dimensions in the assessment team by consulting them during the assessment process.¹¹

The type of expertise required in the assessment team should be clarified during the planning phase and reflected in the terms of reference. There is a particular need to identify the areas for which external experts will need to be hired to complement internal expertise. In the field of SSG/R, expertise may be required to analyse the political context of SSG/R, understand the holistic nature of SSG/R, provide component-specific knowledge (e.g., on policing or border management), review other related reform process that affect SSG/R or conduct a gender or conflict analysis for the sector. The assessment team should also be gender-balanced and include experts who speak the national language. If an external consultant is hired to lead and/or support the assessment, the appropriate amount of lead time must be factored in to identify and contract the expert in accordance with OSCE regulations.

11 For more, see the chapter [“Cross-Dimensional Approaches to SSG/R”](#).

Case Study



SSG/R Needs Assessment for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (IV)

This needs assessment was:

- ▶ **Co-ordinated and managed** by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, in close co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- ▶ **Conducted** by six external international and local consultants, in three teams of two people each, with one international and one local consultant for each thematic area;
- ▶ **Supported** by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance's International Security Sector Advisory Team (DCAF/ISSAT) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), which provided methodological advice and external quality review;
- ▶ **Supported** by a group of focal points for each thematic area from all dimensions within the Mission, as well as relevant staff from the OSCE Secretariat, who provided input to the consultants and reviewed their outputs.

Lessons learned

- ▶ Defining a **clear division of labour from the outset** contributed to effective management and co-ordination of the process, which involved a wide range of internal and external actors.
- ▶ Appointing **focal points from all dimensions within the Mission** helped the consultants to gain a comprehensive overview of the Mission's work and the general situation with regard to security needs and the security sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was instrumental in validating the findings and recommendations.
- ▶ Having a **team of both national and international consultants** helped to combine international best practices with a thorough understanding of the local context. The national consultants also helped to facilitate more effective interviews with national interlocutors, which was essential at a time when in-person meetings were restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Holding **regular co-ordination meetings** helped to ensure effective monitoring in line with the **milestones** and **timeline** established for the process.
- ▶ Having each chapter of the final report written by a different team required **additional time and resources** to ensure consistency and quality throughout the text. When multiple experts are involved in the assessment, having one person lead in drafting the report may help to reduce resource burdens.
- ▶ **Delays can be caused by external factors** (e.g., recruitment and availability of experts, official approvals for interviews with state officials, etc.). Therefore, the timeline should include a buffer to provide for such contingencies.

2.6 Engaging with National Stakeholders from the Outset

When planning a needs assessment, defining co-ordination modalities among the different partners is key. Even when an assessment is OSCE-driven, efforts should be made to involve national authorities and non-governmental actors, including civil society, in order to support national ownership. In OSCE-driven assessments, it is thus important to explain and consult regarding the purpose of the assessment with national stakeholders, to request their practical support and to keep them informed of the results. The OSCE should also discuss with national representatives the findings of the assessment prior to their publication and agree an appropriate format to disseminate them. Whether the assessment is OSCE- or beneficiary-driven, the selection of national stakeholders to engage in the process should be carefully planned.¹²

2.7 Managing Expectations

As SSG/R can be a sensitive topic for individuals and institutions, some national stakeholders may object to the assessment and not wish to provide information. A number of approaches can be used to mitigate this challenge. First, OSCE staff should take the time to explain the purpose of the needs assessment, also highlighting the benefits that national stakeholders may derive from it. Second, OSCE staff should determine the modalities for disseminating and following up on the results of the assessment; it may be necessary to agree with national stakeholders whether the results will be made public or remain internal or to confirm that they will not be publicly released without prior approval. Alternatively, agreement might be sought on developing a short version for the public and a longer internal version that contains more sensitive information. However, OSCE staff should take care not to raise expectations, including hopes among national stakeholders that the assessment will result in immediate funding for reforms. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the messages that will be communicated in preparing for the assessment and after it has been concluded.

2.8 Integrating Gender into SSG/R Needs Assessments

Gender is an important factor in any needs assessment and should, therefore, be mainstreamed throughout the entire process. Gender mainstreaming is much more than mere consultations with women's groups; it involves understanding gender as an integral part of the assessment, rather than an external factor. Gender aspects should be included within the scope of the assessment, either as a separate objective (e.g., to assess the extent to which an institution upholds gender equality internally and in its operations or services) or as a key aspect of other set objectives (e.g., as fundamental to understanding the effectiveness and accountability of a security institution).

12 For further details, see the [section 3.2.1](#) below.

Gender is also important in the selection of the assessment team and involves not only selecting women and men as experts but also ensuring that all team members have the skills to integrate gender perspectives or at least understand the importance of doing so. Other important factors include the need to consult women, LGBTIQ and other groups during the assessment, as well as the benefits of disaggregating data by sex and age when collecting data, including interviews and public surveys.



For further information on gender and needs assessments in the field of SSG/R, see:

- DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW (2008), *Security Sector Reform Assessment, Monitoring & Evaluation and Gender* (Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit);
- DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN Women (2019), *Integrating Gender in Project Design and Monitoring for the Security and Justice Sector* (Gender and Security Toolkit).



3. Conducting the Needs Assessment

3.1 Preparatory Analysis (Desk Research)

The preparatory analysis for a needs assessment is conducted through desk research to systematically gather available primary and secondary data. The analysis maps the broad political, economic, security, institutional and legal context in which the security sector operates. It is also used to identify gaps in data and the questions that will need to be answered during the in-country assessment in order to fill those gaps. A comprehensive preparatory analysis thus helps to plan a purposeful in-country assessment and will consequently reduce the amount of resources required.



For additional guidance and tips on conducting an SSG/R needs assessment, see:

- DCAF/ISSAT (2010), *Operational Guidance Note: Conducting a Security & Justice Assessment*
- FBA (2005), *SSR Assessment Framework*, Chapter 3 (Background Analysis), pp. 16–21

While some of the methods for the preparatory analysis may have already been defined in the planning phase (e.g., methods of data collection), the following additional aspects should be considered during the preparatory analysis.

3.1.1 Designing the assessment questions

Based on the guiding questions specified in the terms of reference, the assessment team will develop more detailed questions to help in collecting and analysing data. These assessment questions should be used during both the desk-research analysis of data and the in-country collection of data (e.g., through semi-structured interviews or focus groups). The following box provides a non-exhaustive list of sample questions for comprehensive SSG/R needs assessments. For further material, see the list of resources at the end of this section.

Info Box 2



Indicative Guiding Questions for Needs Assessments

Mapping the context:

- ▶ What is the political, economic and security situation of the country and what are the implications for the security sector?
- ▶ What are the regional dynamics that could have an impact on SSG/R efforts?
- ▶ Who are the relevant stakeholders and what are the power dynamics between them? How could these support or hinder the reform of the security sector?
- ▶ What are the roles and relations between women, men, girls and boys in the given country? What are the implications of such gender dynamics on the security sector?

Mapping the potential for national ownership of reforms:¹³

National security vision:

- ▶ Is there a national security policy or strategy in place that defines a national vision?
- ▶ Does the national security policy/strategy provide clear priorities that may enable the SSG/R process to realize this vision?
- ▶ Was the national vision developed in a consultative manner and does it reflect the priorities of all national stakeholders (including civil society, minority groups, etc.)?
- ▶ Is there an evident political commitment to reform this area?
- ▶ Are there any political obstacles to further reform?

National capacity to co-ordinate and implement the SSG/R process:

- ▶ Does the government possess the capacity to co-ordinate and implement the SSG/R process?
- ▶ Is there a donor co-ordination mechanism in place led by national stakeholders?
- ▶ Are the financial and human resources of the security sector sufficient to implement the SSG/R process?
- ▶ Are there ongoing reforms or budgetary commitments, which demonstrate that the national government is able or willing to undergo further reforms?

National financial responsibility:

- ▶ Does the reform process fully depend on external funding or will the government allocate funds for reform efforts?
- ▶ Are national funding decisions related to the security sector in line with the national vision for SSG/R?

National capacities for monitoring and evaluation:

- ▶ Is there a national M&E mechanism in place for SSG/R implementation?
- ▶ Is the government ready to implement the recommendations derived from M&E?

13 These categories of national ownership are adapted from United Nations SSR Task Force, *UN Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform* (New York, 2012).

Mapping the perceptions of the population:

- What are people's security needs?
- What do boys, girls, women and men perceive as major security risks?
- Do boys, girls, women and men trust security sector institutions and feel that their security needs are addressed effectively?
- What are the security perceptions and needs of minority communities (if applicable)?
- What are the perceptions of women, men, boys and girls regarding efforts to prevent sexual and gender-based violence?

Mapping the effectiveness of the formal (state) and informal (non-state) security sector:

Roles and responsibilities:

- Are there clear provisions in the legal and constitutional framework that set out the mandates, roles and responsibilities of the security sector?
- Are there any overlapping roles and responsibilities?
- Do the provisions of the legal framework correspond to the reality on the ground?
- To what extent are security sector institutions effectively managed at the strategic level, in particular with regard to strategic communication, strategic planning, budget development, reporting and analysis, and internal regulations?

Human resources:

- What are the numbers of personnel and their ranks/positions (disaggregated by sex)?
- Are women equally represented in the security sector?
- Are minority groups (such as Roma and Sinti) proportionally represented in the security sector?
- What are the obstacles to the recruitment, retention and advancement of women and/or minority groups?
- Is the education/training provided to staff helping to enhance the professionalism of the respective institution?
- What are the critical training needs (or training deficits)?

Performance:

- Do current security sector reform priorities effectively reflect the needs of girls, boys, women and men?
- What are the existing and emerging operational capability/capacity gaps?
- Does the security sector have the human, financial and material resources needed to fulfil its mandate?
- To what extent does the institution use its resources efficiently?
- Does the institution have adequate management practices in place to perform effectively?
- How is the security sector implementing its mandate in practice?
- What gaps need to be filled?
- Is sexual and gender-based violence reported, effectively responded to and prosecuted?
- How does the criminal justice system respond when a crime is committed?

Co-ordination and partnerships:

- ▶ What is the relationship between security sector institutions generally?
- ▶ What is the relationship between the police and prosecutors?
- ▶ What is the relationship between the security providers and those responsible for security management and oversight?
- ▶ Are there functioning co-ordination mechanisms in place between related institutions, including non-state security and justice providers?
- ▶ What is the relationship between civil society and security sector institutions?

Mapping the accountability of the security sector:*Internal accountability of the security sector:*

- ▶ Are there mechanisms for internal controls (e.g., codes of conduct or disciplinary mechanisms)?
- ▶ Are the mechanisms being used?
- ▶ Do investigations of misconduct result in appropriate action?
- ▶ Is there evidence of corruption?
- ▶ Does the security sector respect human rights?

External oversight:

- ▶ Are there clear provisions in the legal and constitutional framework to enable oversight bodies to play their roles effectively?
- ▶ Are there legal ambiguities or deficits that influence the effectiveness and accountability of the institutions?
- ▶ Are there appropriate mechanisms for external oversight (e.g., parliament, ombuds institutions)?
- ▶ Are these mechanisms performing their oversight role? If not, why not?
- ▶ What civil society organizations are active in the area of SSG/R? Do civil society and the media contribute to monitoring the security sector, including non-state security and justice providers?
- ▶ Is the security sector subject to the same public financial management as other public sector institutions?
- ▶ Does civil society participate in parliamentary hearings? Does it have the capacity to provide expertise?



For more examples of illustrative questions to guide SSG/R assessments, see:

- ▶ OECD (2008), *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (pp. 52–56)
- ▶ FBA, *Assessment Framework Insert – Sectorial Questions*

For additional guidance on assessing the criminal justice system, including specific questions to assess different parts of the security sector, see:

- ▶ UNODC (2006), *Criminal Justice Assessment Toolkit*

For additional guidance on assessing defence, see:

- RAND (2010), *Defense Sector Assessment Rating Tool*

For assessment questions that examine the interaction between the different criminal justice sector institutions, other governmental agencies and non-state actors, see:

- OSCE (2013), *Police Reform within the Framework of Criminal Justice System Reform*

For examples of questions to assess the capacity of parliaments to conduct security sector oversight, see:

- Fuior, T. (2011), *Parliamentary Powers in Security Sector Governance*, pp. 35–59 (Toolkit for Parliamentary Self-Assessment).

3.1.2 Reviewing relevant sources of information

Information from multiple sources and institutions (see info box 3) should be reviewed to ensure a broad understanding of the political context, the legal framework, previously identified gaps and challenges, evaluation findings and lessons learned, and the roles and responsibilities of security institutions. Gender-related aspects must also be considered, such as the security risks and needs of women, men, boys and girls and their access to security services, as well as what hinders gender equality in the security sector. A specific gender analysis of the security sector, including on the representation of women in senior positions and their roles in decision-making, can help to identify gender-related gaps and needs.

3.1.3 Reflecting on the regional dimension

During the desk research, appropriate consideration also needs to be given to the regional dimension, as it is an important element of situation analysis. The regional dimension may include regional conflict dynamics, sources of cross-border tensions (e.g., organized crime or drug trafficking) and regional co-operation dynamics (e.g., regional networks or platforms). Regional challenges may require specific actions in SSG/R, such as strengthening international co-operation. Desk research should therefore seek to answer the following questions:

- Are there ongoing initiatives or existing commitments at the regional or international level that may provide entry points for national reform efforts?
- Have other states in the region recently undergone similar reform processes from which lessons may be learned?
- Would a regional approach to SSG/R support be valuable?¹⁴

14 For more, see the chapter “Strengthening Regional Co-operation on SSG/R”.

Info Box 3



Relevant Sources of Information

National and international strategic and legal documents	OSCE documents
▶ Peace agreement(s) (if relevant) ▶ National security strategy, policy documents and action plans related to the security sector (rule of law, justice reform, prison reform, etc.) ▶ Strategic documents related to horizontal governance (public administration reform, Parliament, oversight reform, etc.) ▶ National laws pertinent to SSG/R ▶ International conventions ratified by the host government ▶ Other regional and international political and policy commitments (e.g., SDGs)	▶ Mandates of OSCE field operations ▶ Previous needs assessments ▶ OSCE questionnaire on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, including state responses ▶ Past activities of OSCE institutions and field operations, including former project evaluations and self-evaluations ▶ Political and monitoring reports (e.g., by ODIHR, HCNM, RFoM) and review of legal framework by ODIHR ▶ Thematic annual reports (e.g., on police-related activities, gender) and assessments (e.g., ODIHR field assessment visit reports on Roma and Sinti issues) ▶ Former MoUs with host governments ▶ Opinions by ODIHR on legislation related to the security sector ▶ Election assessment and observation reports by ODIHR
Other national documents	Documents produced by other actors
▶ Sectoral strategies (e.g., police reform strategy) ▶ Operational policy (e.g., human resources management policy, code of ethics) ▶ National action plans (e.g., on gender, anti-trafficking, Roma and Sinti) ▶ Crime statistics, victimization studies, public surveys, statistics on the ethnicities of arrested persons	▶ Civil society assessments ▶ Studies and reports by academia/think tanks ▶ Media reports ▶ Reports by Transparency International, Freedom House, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, European Roma Rights Centre, etc. ▶ Former assessments, evaluations and progress reports by international actors (e.g., Council of Europe, European Commission, donors)

3.1.4 Stakeholder mapping and identifying priorities for the in-country assessment

Data collected during the preparatory phase should be analysed to identify priorities for the subsequent in-country assessment. Priorities may be identified on the basis of:

- **Gaps in information:** The desk-based research may highlight areas where information is lacking. Such areas should be given special attention during the in-country assessment so that interviews can help to complete the picture.
- **Potential priorities for reform:** Potential gaps and priority needs for SSG/R may be identified during the research. Assumptions about needs should be tested through interviews during the in-country assessment to ensure they hold true.

On the basis of the preliminary gaps and priorities identified during the desk-based preparatory analysis, the key stakeholders can be mapped. Based on the stakeholder mapping, decisions can be taken on specific stakeholders who should be interviewed in order to fill specific gaps, in addition to interviewing a broad representative sample of interlocutors.



For possible tools that can be used for stakeholder mapping, see:

- DCAF/ISSAT, *Stakeholder Analysis Tool*
- FBA (2005), *SSR Assessment Framework, Annex B (Example of Stakeholder Analysis Matrix)*, pp. 35

3.2 In-Country Assessment

The next step of the assessment process is to collect primary data in the country in question. The in-country assessment will be based on the preparatory analysis and tailored to fill the information gaps identified and/or to test the validity of the assumptions made about priority needs. The in-country assessment should include meetings with national and international stakeholders, who represent a variety of areas relevant to the assessment, including national authorities (beneficiaries), civil society organizations and other non-state actors (academia, think tanks, research groups), and international actors active in the sector. In the OSCE context, the most common methods of primary data collection in the area of SSG/R include semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Occasionally, processes and procedures may also be observed.



For additional guidance and tips on in-country assessment, see:

- FBA (2005), *SSR Assessment Framework, Chapter 4 (In-country Assessment Phase)*, pp. 16–21

3.2.1 Inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement and interviews

Assessments in the area of SSG/R must be inclusive when selecting interlocutors and should seek to engage both those providing SSG/R assistance and those benefiting from such support. As the perceptions and security needs within and outside the capital may differ significantly, efforts should also be made to meet with relevant representatives from regional and rural areas.

When organizing meetings, representatives of the following categories of interlocutors should be included:

- **Security sector officials:** If the assessment is intended to be comprehensive, meetings will need to be held with a broad selection of security sector actors.¹⁵ If the assessment is intended to focus on a specific area of the security sector, for example, defence or criminal justice, meetings should still be held with representatives of closely related areas as they can provide external perspectives and additional information (e.g., with regard to co-ordination and co-operation, effectiveness, etc.).
- **Civil society and other non-state actors:** In needs assessments, representatives of civil society and other non-state actors are often overlooked but essential interlocutors. They often possess knowledge about particular security challenges faced by the general population or by certain groups, such as women or minorities. Thus, they may have insight on specific priorities that should be addressed through reform efforts and knowledge of ongoing relevant projects. Consultations with civil society and other non-state actors should include women and minority organizations and/or human rights groups, independent think tanks, academia, research institutes or even chambers of commerce.
- **Oversight actors:** In order to assess the accountability of the security sector, consultations should be held with representatives of parliament, the judiciary and other relevant national oversight bodies, such as ombuds institutions, commissioners or anti-corruption agencies.
- **International actors:** To help identify lessons learned from previous international interventions as well as current gaps, it is important to map past, current and planned international support and relevant lessons learned. International actors too may be able to provide a different perspective on the reform process as well as donor co-ordination efforts.
- **OSCE field staff:** OSCE field operations are one of the OSCE's significant comparative advantages. Therefore, if present in the country under assessment, OSCE field staff should be consulted about the work of the security sector, the population's perception of it, past experiences and lessons learned and any specific challenges on the ground. The field offices of

15 See [Figure 2 in the chapter “Understanding SSG/R in the OSCE Context”](#).

OSCE field operations have at times experienced difficulties in feeding information into policy processes at the capital level. Therefore, needs assessments provide an ideal opportunity to ensure that localized information is captured and shared with appropriate stakeholders.

3.2.2 Primary data collection

Primary data should be collected on the basis of the questions developed during the preparatory phase. The purpose is to collect data that is not available in the secondary and primary sources collected through the desk research. In the OSCE context, this will be usually done through semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups. Several important points should be kept in mind when using these methods:

First, the same set of questions need to be asked of all respondents representing the same groups (e.g., civil society, security providers) so that the data collected can be compared and triangulated. While each interview/focus group will have its own pace and direction, a certain degree of standardization is required.

Second, to capture all information, thorough notes are required. Respondents should always be made aware that all information they provide will be treated as confidential and anonymous. If possible, the interviewer should be accompanied by a dedicated note taker. Interviews can also be recorded, but this may not be feasible in some contexts. Even if a respondent agrees to be recorded, their readiness to speak openly may be indirectly influenced. If an interview will be recorded, informed consent must be sought from the respondent, regardless of whether the recording is only for internal purposes.

Finally, when conducting interviews with persons in vulnerable situations, the do-no-harm principle (DNH) must always be strictly followed. The DNH principle recognizes the potential negative effects of interventions and the need to take them into consideration beforehand. In the context of needs assessments, DNH means that consideration is given to risks that persons in vulnerable situations who participate in the assessment may face by being involved in the process itself, and that adequate mitigation measures are taken to provide additional safeguards for their engagement in order to avoid causing any harm.



For additional guidance on DNH, see:

► CDA (2004), *The Do No Harm Handbook*

3.3 Analysing and Validating the Results

Once sufficient information has been gathered by the assessment team, it must be compiled and analysed to identify key findings and recommendations. The guiding questions developed at the start of the exercise (section 3.1.1) can be used to structure the analysis and the options for the way forward. Following that structure, the data can be analysed as follows:

- **Understanding the context:** The context should include a **situation analysis** and a **stakeholder analysis**. Key questions include: How is the general political and economic situation in the state concerned expected to affect the performance of security sector institutions and opportunities for SSG/R? What is the general situation with regard to security sector institutions' service delivery – what works well, what are challenges? What is the situation within the security sector with regard to human rights and gender equality? What are the security needs and the security perceptions of women, men, boys and girls? How do such gender relations interact with power dynamics in the given context? Are there important national processes and regional dynamics that need to be considered? To what extent will the situation and the power dynamics affect the potential for reform efforts? Which other actors (host government, civil society, donors, international organizations) play a role in the sector and its governance? What are the power dynamics between the main stakeholders? Which parties are likely to positively and negatively react to the SSG/R process?
- **Considering the potential for national ownership of reforms:** What is the national vision of security? Are national authorities ready to engage in reforms? Would any groups (e.g., women, youth, minorities or other) be in a particularly vulnerable situation in the process? What are the national financial and human capacities to design, implement and monitor the reform process? How much reliance will there be on external support? In which areas will there likely be more political will to engage (e.g., because the area is perceived as a priority or is less sensitive than other areas)? Is there a willingness to strengthen both the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector?
- **Understanding which security needs of the population are being met and which are not and why (including both effectiveness and accountability gaps):** This is the core of the assessment and the **problem analysis**. Key questions include: What are the key security problems and needs of women, men, boys and girls? What hinders security sector institutions from addressing these problems and needs? Are hindrances linked to political will, institutional capacities or legislative gaps? What legal and policy gaps have been identified? What are the institutional capacity and capacity development gaps? Are there geographical differences in service delivery between local governments? What are the preconditions for sustainability of institutional support actions? What is the role (if any) of the actors involved in the external oversight of the security sector in front of these challenges? What are the weaknesses and strengths of existing internal accountability systems?

Info Box 3



Political Economy Analysis

The findings from analysing the situation, the problem, the stakeholders, national ownership and national capacity, etc. can help in developing a political economy analysis. Political economy analysis can be defined as “the interaction of political and economic processes in a society, the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time.”¹⁶ Thus, a political economy analysis will help to provide a comprehensive picture of the context in which security sector institutions operate and to identify the best options for the way forward. It aims to increase understanding about the interaction between institutions and stakeholders, through a political and economic lens, and to explain why institutions perform in one way and not another. With this knowledge, the right incentives and constraints can be identified that enable or challenge behavioural change (and its sustainability over time) in the security sector. This knowledge can help in developing programmatic support and the design of context-specific reforms towards sustainable progress.



For additional guidance on political economy analysis, see:

- ▶ OECD (2015), *A Governance Practitioner's Notebook* (chapter “Putting political economy to use in aid policies”)
- ▶ Overseas Development Institute (2016), *Using political economy analysis in conflict security and justice programmes*
- ▶ GSDRC (2014), *Political Economy Analysis: Topic Guide*

- **Identifying options for the way forward:** Which areas of reform should be prioritized? Is it necessary to pursue quick wins in order to build confidence or support for more comprehensive reforms? Do the priority areas identified for support match the OSCE's mandates, areas of expertise and capacities? If not, can the OSCE share the findings with other actors who are better able to provide support? Are there issues on which close collaboration with other international actors would be beneficial?

After analysing the results, they should be **validated**. The purpose of validation is to categorize the preliminary findings and recommendations so that they can be presented to the beneficiaries and partners for feedback and confirmation. Feedback can be sought in various ways, including validation workshops, focus group discussions, follow-up interviews with selected respondents from the in-country assessment, or written questionnaires. If the needs assessment is meant to provide recommendations for OSCE programmatic activities, OSCE staff should be involved in the validation exercise. Feedback from the validation exercise should be incorporated into the final needs assessment report and recommendations.

16 Department for International Development, *Political Economy Analysis – How To Note* (2009).

Case Study



SSG/R Needs Assessment for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (V)

This needs assessment was conducted in five stages:

- 1. Methodology workshops:** The process started with a series of workshops conducted by DCAF/ISSAT to ensure that all three teams of international and local consultants applied a consistent methodology. The workshops were also used to identify the users (individuals and communities) in each of the three thematic areas: (1) integrity and anti-corruption, (2) community security and policing and (3) integrated border management. The Mission's focal points for each thematic area also participated in the workshops.
- 2. Preparatory analysis:** The workshops were followed by desk research conducted by each team to map the security needs of users and to identify the relevant national security sector actors and international donors. The teams complemented the desk research in consultation with civil society representatives of specific groups of users and the Mission's programmatic staff. Some teams also held focus group discussions with relevant groups. The outcomes of this stage included a short situational analysis, a stakeholder mapping and questionnaires for semi-structured interviews with different groups of respondents (security sector representatives, international community, civil society).
- 3. In-country assessment:** In the next stage, the assessment teams conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives from relevant national security sector institutions, academia, civil society and the international community. In total, almost 180 individuals were interviewed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most interviews were conducted by video-conference or by phone. Some interviews took place in person with strict adherence to safety measures.
- 4. Analysis:** In the fourth stage, the assessment teams analysed the data collected to identify gaps between users' needs, the capacities of the security sector and the support provided by the international community. Based on the analysis, the assessment teams formulated recommendations for the Mission's future programmatic support to the security sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- 5. Validation:** To validate the results, the interim recommendations were presented to relevant staff from the Mission and the Secretariat in December 2020. After that, the draft report was shared for written comments with staff from the Mission and the Secretariat, DCAF/ISSAT and the FBA. Three validation workshops were then held with Secretariat and Mission staff in February 2021. Based on workshops and the written feedback received, additional findings and recommendations were elaborated and refined in March–April 2021. The report was finalized in May 2021.



For more information on how to conduct a situation analysis, stakeholder analysis or problem analysis, see:

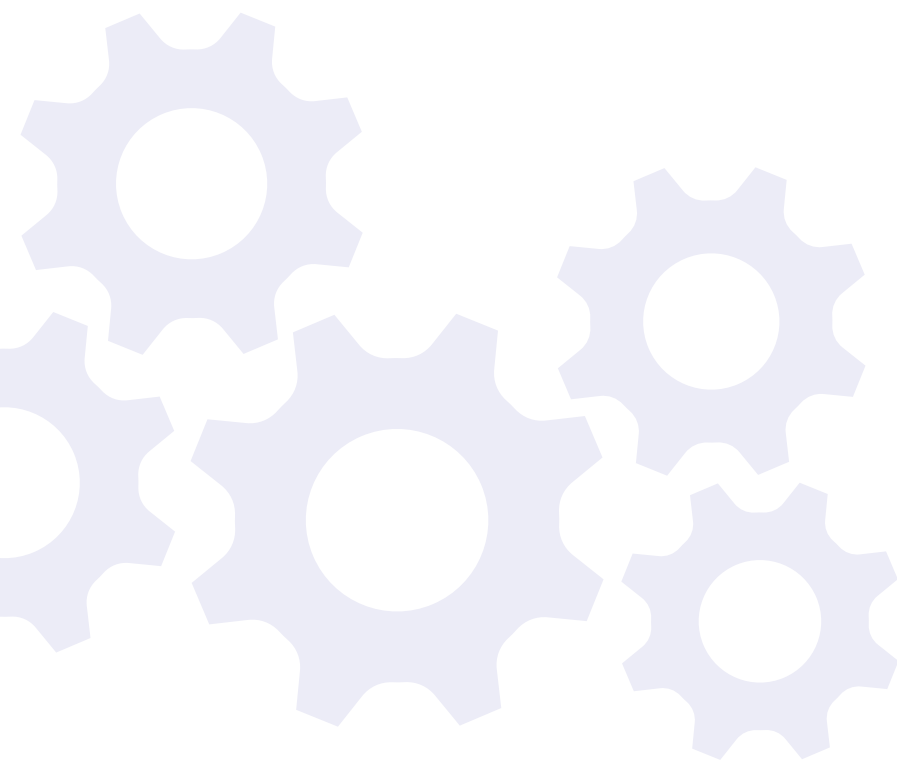
- OSCE (2010), *Project Management in the OSCE: A Manual for Programme and Project Managers* (sections 5.5–5.9)

For a list of practical tools that can be used for analysis, see:

- FBA (2005), *SSR Assessment Framework*, Annex C: Matrix of Analytical Tools
- DCAF/ISSAT (2015), *Top 10 Programming Tools for Security and Justice Reform*

For conflict analysis and power relations, see:

- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2005), *Conflict Analysis Tools*
- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (2006), *Power Analysis*



4. Following Up on the Needs Assessment

The last phase of the needs assessment is to follow up on the results by disseminating the findings and ensuring they are put to good use.

4.1 Disseminating the Findings and Recommendations

With whom the findings should be shared and how they will be disseminated should have been determined during the planning phase. This planning should also have included how feedback will be incorporated and who will be responsible for implementing the recommendations. In most cases, the findings will be delivered in written form as a report to the main stakeholders (both the OSCE and national partners). If the results are to be shared more widely, the findings should first be shared with the stakeholders involved to obtain their feedback and to agree on how to address the recommendations made.

4.2 Feeding the Findings into Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

The results of the needs assessment should be analysed and fed into OSCE project and programme planning. In particular, the findings should inform the development of projects and programmes that the OSCE will prioritize for support, as well as the short-, mid- and long-term results, to which OSCE activities should contribute. In addition to the analysis of the data and the main problems identified, these findings should contribute to an understanding of relevant cause-and-effect relationships – for example, by means of a Theory of Change – and identify how the activities and outputs of the projects will lead to addressing the core problem identified or what results would be required towards the mid-term outcome and objective.¹⁷

When developing UB and EXB projects and programmes that address the findings of the needs assessment, some of the data gathered should be included in the UB programme document and project logframe and the M&E frameworks: (1) to identify and measure project indicators for objectives, outcomes and outputs, (2) to identify risks and assumptions and (3) to generate baselines against which to measure progress and possible targets. Moreover, if findings from the needs assessment are relevant to other OSCE dimensions, and these were not involved from the outset, staff should ensure that these are appropriately shared with their colleagues so that they can also feed into their project and programme planning.

17 For more, see the chapter “Results-Oriented Programming in the Field of SSG/R”.

Case Study



SSG/R Needs Assessment for the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (VI)

The outcomes of the assessment were presented to the OSCE Group of Friends of SSG/R in Vienna and to the international community in Sarajevo. The programmatic recommendations from the assessment were also discussed with OSCE senior management in three sessions, one dedicated to each thematic area. The outcomes of the discussions were then fed into the Mission's internal planning process for 2022 and beyond.



For additional guidance and tips on following up on an SSG/R needs assessment, see:

- DCAF/ISSAT (2010), *Operational Guidance Note: Following on from a Security & Justice Assessment*



5. Checklist

The following checklist is intended to help programme/project management staff to:

- Implement a comprehensive approach in conducting SSG/R related needs assessments;
- Promote national ownership of SSG/R processes;
- Mainstream gender equality and human rights principles throughout the assessment;
- Maximize the effectiveness of needs assessments.

The purpose is not to “check” every item, but to provide an aide-memoire to consider key aspects and suggestions that might be relevant for your daily work.

Planning the Needs Assessment: Defining the Terms of Reference

Defining the objectives and scope of the assessment

- ☐ Are specific objectives agreed, taking into account all three OSCE dimensions?
- ☐ Are the objectives clear and understood by all stakeholders involved?
- ☐ Will the assessment be broad (i.e., sector-wide) or specific (i.e., assessing one or two security subsectors, while still supporting a comprehensive approach)?
- ☐ Are the scope and limitations of the assessment clear?
- ☐ What resources are required and available (time, personnel, funding, etc.)?

Defining the methodology

- ☐ Which methodology will be applied?
- ☐ What are the opportunities and challenges of the methodology selected?

Defining the methods and recognizing challenges in data collection

- ☐ What methods will be used to collect both primary and secondary data?
- ☐ Have both qualitative and quantitative methods been considered?
- ☐ What main sources of primary and secondary data are available?

- ☐ What are the potential challenges related to data collection that might need to be mitigated and/or acknowledged in the report, especially with regard to availability and reliability?

Setting benchmarks and developing guiding questions

- ☐ What benchmarks can be set related to the effectiveness, accountability, inclusivity, responsiveness, human-rights compliance and gender equality in the security sector?
- ☐ Are there specific international standards, OSCE principles and commitments, as well as national commitments and policies that can be used to set benchmarks?
- ☐ What are the key questions that the assessment aims to address?

Establishing roles and responsibilities

- ☐ Have clear roles and responsibilities been assigned for the institutional lead of the assessment (OSCE internal or external) and to co-ordinate across the three OSCE dimensions?
- ☐ What kind of expertise is required to conduct the assessment?
- ☐ Which external actors will be involved? Which parts of the assessment will they contribute to? Which institution(s) will contribute funding and/or expertise?
- ☐ Is the team gender-balanced? Does the team possess gender expertise?
- ☐ Are representatives of each OSCE dimension included in the team?

Engaging with national stakeholders from the outset

- ☐ How does the assessment promote national and local ownership?
- ☐ Which national partners, institutions and agencies will be involved in the assessment?
- ☐ Will all actors who play a significant role in the reform process be consulted (security sector officials, parliamentarians, etc.)?
- ☐ Are non-state actors, including civil society, academia, and media, included in the assessment?

Managing expectations

- ☐ Have the purpose and benefits of the needs assessment been consulted with and/or explained to all relevant national stakeholders?
- ☐ Has agreement with relevant national stakeholders been reached on how to disseminate the results?

Integrating gender into SSG/R needs assessments

- ☐ Will a gender analysis be conducted as part of the assessment?
Has assessment of gender equality been included as a separate objective?
- ☐ If gender equality is not included as a separate objective, how is gender mainstreamed in the assessment's objectives/sub-objectives (e.g., to understand the effectiveness and accountability of a security institution)?
- ☐ Has gender been taken into account in selecting the assessment team?
- ☐ Are women and LGBTIQ groups planned to be consulted during the assessment?

Conducting the Needs Assessment: Preparatory Analysis

Designing the assessment questions

- ☐ Do the assessment questions adequately consider the need to map the potential for national ownership and the perceptions of different groups of the population, including women and youth?
- ☐ Do the assessment questions adequately examine the security needs of the population?
- ☐ Do the assessment questions adequately examine the extent to which the security sector is effective, accountable, inclusive, and responsive, while operating within the framework of democratic governance and human rights?
- ☐ Do the questions ensure that the needs assessment will be comprehensive, regardless of whether it will assess the entire sector or only one or two components?

- ☐ Are the assessment questions for respondents from the same groups (e.g., security sector professionals, civil society, international actors, etc.) standardized to allow comparison and triangulation of the information collected?

Reviewing relevant sources of information

- ☐ Has information from multiple sources and institutions been reviewed, including gender-related data and information from local civil society organizations?
- ☐ Has the reliability of the data been verified?
- ☐ Is the data disaggregated by sex and population groups (e.g., minorities)?
- ☐ What are the gaps in the analysed data that will need to be filled in during the in-country assessment?

Reflecting on the regional dimension

- ☐ Has appropriate consideration been given to the regional dimension (e.g., regional conflict co-operation dynamics or sources of cross-border tensions)?
- ☐ Are there ongoing regional initiatives or existing commitments that may provide entry points for reform efforts at the national level?
- ☐ Have other states in the region recently undergone similar reform processes from which lessons may be learned?
- ☐ Would a regional approach to SSG/R support be valuable?

Stakeholder mapping and identifying priorities for the in-country assessment

- ☐ Have all relevant stakeholders been identified?
- ☐ What emerging gaps and priorities for SSG/R has the preparatory research identified?
- ☐ What additional data is required from whom to answer the assessment questions?

Conducting the Needs Assessment: In-country Assessment

Inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement and interviews

- ☐ Have meetings been arranged with a broad selection of representatives from security sector institutions, management and oversight actors, civil society, academia, media, international actors and OSCE staff?
- ☐ Have meetings been arranged with respondents from different parts/regions of the country?

Primary data collection

- ☐ How will the data from interviews/focus groups be collected? Have respondents agreed with the way their replies will be recorded (“informed consent”)?
- ☐ How will the collected data be stored?
- ☐ How is confidentiality and anonymity ensured?
- ☐ Has the “do-no-harm” principle been considered when selecting and engaging with respondents?

Analysing and validating the results

- ☐ What strategic recommendations can be drawn from the assessment?
- ☐ How will the general political situation (based on the information collected in the needs assessment) affect SSG/R efforts?
- ☐ Is there a political willingness and adequate resources for national actors willing to engage in SSG/R?
- ☐ What are the key security needs of women, men, boys and girls?
- ☐ What are the challenges for the security sector in addressing the key security needs?
- ☐ What strategic options have been identified for the OSCE’s support to SSG/R?

- ☐ Have the preliminary findings (and their possible interpretations) been validated by the beneficiaries and other relevant partners?
- ☐ Are data collection challenges or shortcomings recognized in the assessment report?

Following Up on the Needs Assessment

Disseminating the findings and recommendations

- ☐ How will the findings be disseminated and with whom will they be shared?
- ☐ How will the findings be shared with colleagues from other OSCE Dimensions and Executive Structures?
- ☐ What is the follow-up with relevant national stakeholders on how to address the findings and recommendations from the assessment?

Feeding the findings into planning, monitoring and evaluation

- ☐ How will the findings feed back into planning mechanisms and inform the development of OSCE projects and programmes?
- ☐ How will the assessment be integrated in the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of UB and EXB projects?



6. Resources

- ▶ CDA, *The Do No Harm Handbook* (Cambridge, MA, 2004).
Available at: https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/CLP_Do_No_Harm_Handbook_2004_EN.pdf.
- ▶ DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN Women, “Integrating Gender in Project Design and Monitoring for the Security and Justice Sector,” in *Gender and Security Toolkit* (Geneva, 2019).
Available at: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/GSToolkit_Tool-15_EN_FINAL_0.pdf.
- ▶ DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, “Security Sector Reform Assessment, Monitoring & Evaluation and Gender” in *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva, 2008).
Available at: <https://issat.dcaf.ch/ser/download/4889/43182/Tool%2011-SSR%20Assessment,%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20and%20Gender.pdf>.
- ▶ DCAF/ISSAT, *A Community-Based Approach to Criminal Justice Assessments* (Geneva, 2014).
Available at: <https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/62035/1025917/Community%20Based%20Assessment%20-%20Full%20Guide.pdf>.
- ▶ DCAF/ISSAT, *Operational Guidance Note: Conducting a Security & Justice Assessment* (Geneva, 2010).
Available at: <https://issat.dcaf.ch/content/download/1179/8947/%EF%AC%81le/>.
- ▶ DCAF/ISSAT, *Operational Guidance Note: Following on from a Security & Justice Assessment* (Geneva, 2010).
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