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POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Progress Review and Final Evaluation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021

Final Report

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Objectives and Purpose of the Evaluation	4
1.2 Evaluation Methodology	5
1.3 Challenges and Methodological Adaptations	6
2. Evaluation Findings	9
2.1 Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance and Effectiveness	9
2.1.1 <i>To what extent are the CoE's projects in line with the needs and priorities of the governmental institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina?</i>	9
2.1.2 <i>To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan achieved their objectives?</i>	9
2.1.3 <i>In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality (by mainstreaming gender)?</i>	9
2.1.4 <i>To what extent a has human rights approach been integrated in the project implementation?</i>	11
2.1.5 <i>To what extent have civil society organisations been integrated in project implementation?</i>	11
2.2 Evaluation Criterion 2: Coherence	12
2.2.1 <i>To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been internally co-ordinated and internal coherence assured?</i>	12
2.2.2 <i>To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been co-ordinated with other institutions and donors, and how do co-ordination efforts address duplication?</i>	12
2.2.3 <i>To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Action Plan?</i>	13
2.3 Evaluation Criterion 3: Efficiency and Added Value	14
2.3.1 <i>To what extent did the fact that a project was part of the Action Plan contribute to the achievement of project objectives?</i>	14
2.3.2 <i>What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic related restriction measures on the Action Plan implementation and how did the CoE adapt?</i>	15
2.3.3 <i>To what extent are the costs proportionate to outputs and outcomes?</i>	16
2.4 Evaluation Criterion 4: Impact and Sustainability	17

2.4.1	<i>To what extent has the Council of Europe contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina?</i>	17
2.4.2	<i>Did the Action Plan have different outcomes for men and women?</i>	18
2.4.3	<i>Have the outcomes built on the results already achieved under the first Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017?</i>	18
2.5	Evaluation Criterion 5: Visibility	19
2.5.1	<i>To what extent has the Council of Europe visibility been ensured in the Action Plan implementation?</i>	19
2.5.2	<i>Were citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences sufficiently updated on the outcomes and benefits of the projects?</i>	21
2.6	Rated Questions	21
3.	Conclusions	23
3.1	Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance and Effectiveness	23
3.2	Evaluation Criterion 2: Coherence	24
3.3	Evaluation Criterion 3: Efficiency and Added Value	24
3.4	Evaluation Criterion 4: Impact and Sustainability	25
3.5	Evaluation Criterion 5: Visibility	25
4.	Recommendations	25
4.1	Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance and Effectiveness	25
4.2	Evaluation Criterion 2: Coherence	26
4.3	Evaluation Criterion 3: Efficiency and Added Value	26
4.4	Evaluation Criterion 4: Impact and Sustainability	27
4.5	Evaluation Criterion 5: Visibility	27
	Annexe 1. Evaluation Questions	28
	Annexe 2. Semi-structured Interviews Questionnaires	29
	High-Level Questionnaire	29
	Project-Level Questionnaire	30
	Rated Questions	32

Annexe 3. List of Interviewees	34
Semi-structured interviews	34
At kick-off meetings only	35
Annexe 4. List of Documents Reviewed	38

1. Introduction

1. The *Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021* was adopted by the Committee of Ministers (CM) at its 1319th meeting on 13 June 2018.
2. The Action Plan (AP) was developed taking into account decisions, resolutions, recommendations, conclusions of reports and opinions provided by the Council of Europe's (CoE) monitoring bodies - the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Congress), the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the opinions of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the reports of the Commissioner for Human Rights (the Commissioner) and shortcomings identified in the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), building upon the results of previous co-operation programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, it built on the results of the first Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017.
3. The *Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018–2021* had a budget of EUR 18.1 million at the time of adoption. The revised budget (following the submission of project proposals and projects extensions) amounted to EUR 21.2 million. The Action Plan received approximately EUR 12.5 million as of 30 September 2020 (69% of the initial AP budget and 59% of the total revised budget), mostly through the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey” (Horizontal Facility) Phase I and II, and also through voluntary contributions (VCs) and the ordinary budget. The donors to the Action Plan are the European Union, the Human Rights Trust Fund (which brings together seven contributors: Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Fund to End Violence Against Children.

1.1 Objectives and Purpose of the Evaluation

4. The Evaluation of the CoE AP aimed to provide the stakeholders of AP with an objective assessment of the results that have been achieved through the CoE's support and partnerships with other key actors.
5. The main objectives of the evaluation were:
 - 5.1. To assess the outcomes achieved by the projects implemented in the framework of the AP, and identify to what extent they have helped Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to move towards necessary reforms in line with the CoE's standards and to advance on its European Union (EU) accession agenda;
 - 5.2. To provide a picture on the way the CoE has implemented the projects (working/implementation methods) in the framework of the AP, as well as on the obstacles faced, if any;
 - 5.3. To learn lessons from the way in which the CoE managed the implementation of the projects in the framework of the AP;

- 5.4. To provide recommendations for the development of the potential upcoming *Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2025* to be based on lessons learnt and best practices;
- 5.5. To assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restriction measures on the implementation of the AP and the progress towards the achievement of its outcomes;
- 5.6. To assess the degree to which gender has been mainstreamed through the implementation of the Action Plan;
- 5.7. To assess the degree to which a human rights-based approach has been integrated in the Action Plan implementation.

1.2 Evaluation Methodology

6. The evaluation was based on a detailed review of seven Action Plan (AP) projects across three pillars (democracy, rule of law and human rights). The sampled projects included:
 7. In the Human Rights pillar:
 - 7.1. Regional project: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level ROMACTED.
 - 7.2. HF II 20 - Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina
 8. In the Rule of Law pillar:
 - 8.1. Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners
 - 8.2. HF II 33 - Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in BiH
 - 8.3. Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina
 9. In the Democracy pillar:
 - 9.1. HF II 21 - Quality Education for all (QUALITY ED - BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA)
 - 9.2. Electoral support for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections
10. The evaluation process was guided by the Council of Europe Evaluation Guidelines of the Directorate of Internal Oversight and other relevant instruments, such as the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 and the Council of Europe Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Co-operation projects.
11. The evaluation questions were based on the six criteria endorsed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC): relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, as well as the CoE's added value. A full list of evaluation questions is available in Annexe 1.
12. The evaluation methodology included a document review and semi-structured interviews with CoE staff in the Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg and in the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo, as well as co-operation partners in BiH and selected donors (the EU, the US and Norway).
13. The literature covered the main reports of the Council of Europe projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the scope of the CoE Action Plan and reports of donor projects working in the same fields. A list of the reviewed documents is available in Annexe 4.

14. The interviews involved 34 interviews with 38 respondents (4 of the interviews involved 2 participants), which is a statistically meaningful number to draw robust findings from. The target of 35 respondents was achieved and exceeded. Interviewees were consulted via semi-structured interviews (entirely conducted online due to the applicable COVID-19 mitigation measures), complemented by Rated Questions. A list of interviewees is available in Annexe 3.
15. To better address the need to interview both top-level functionaries (Headquarters staff in Strasbourg; managerial-level staff at CoE Sarajevo Office; and donors) and individuals involved in project implementation (project staff members and beneficiary institutions), the interviewers employed two distinct questionnaires designed to capture both high-level and hands-on knowledge, respectively.
16. In both cases, the conversations were structured in an Action Plan-centric way, so as to best capture the relevance of the AP for that specific project and vice versa, taking into consideration 1) relevance and effectiveness, 2) coherence, 3) efficiency and added value, 4) impact and sustainability, and 5) visibility. Rated Questions were shared with informants in advance. The questionnaires and rated questions employed during the semi-structured interviews are available in Annexe 2.

1.3 Challenges and Methodological Adaptations

17. Interview scheduling was relatively smooth. Access was, on the whole, not a significant issue: evaluators could count on the full support of the CoE staff in Strasbourg in obtaining contact details for the majority of the interviewees contacted, whereas a minority was obtained through snowballing. Most respondents replied in good time and were happy to be interviewed. In several cases, however, responsiveness was patchy or lacking, and evaluators had to follow up multiple times. On four occasions, interviewees did not show up due to health or technical issues. Such interviews had to be rescheduled.
18. All respondents agreed to the interviews being recorded for internal purposes, upon receiving an exhaustive interview information sheet via email prior to the conversation. Evaluators conducting the interviews took notes in real time, subsequently integrating them by listening to relevant portions of the audio recordings. Care was taken to note any relevant documents mentioned by the interviewees and include them in the document review; not all documents, however, were available in English. The default platform used was Zoom (with web link set up in advance by the evaluators). Whenever the interviewees expressed a preference for a different platform, the evaluators agreed to the respondents' preferred choice.
19. In cases in which respondents did not speak English, the language barrier was successfully overcome due to the presence of an evaluator with fluency in the local language or translators brought in by the interviewees themselves. Such interviews were more time- and labour-intensive, as they required a translation and fuller notes to assist the comprehension of the other evaluators.
20. Initially, the plan was to interview 5 people per sample project, trying to ensure an overall gender balance and combining one Headquarters staff member (or CoE Sarajevo Office executive where appropriate), one project staff member, one donor, and two from beneficiary institutions.¹ In practice, this was not possible in all cases due to the unavailability of some of the potential participants or the particular composition of staff and stakeholders in each project.
21. The final composition of the interviewees is summarised in Table 1 below:

¹ The differentiation is between respondents with a higher degree of responsibility (HQ / CoE Sarajevo office executive / Unit team leaders); and staff who were more involved in the day-to-day running of the projects, such as project managers. These two groups of people were asked two slightly different sets of questions: see Annex 2, High-level questionnaire and Project-level questionnaire, respectively.

Table 1. Sample of Interviewees

Project	Number of interviewees by gender		Number of interviewees by level		Total interviews per project	Percentage of total interviewees
	Men	Women	High-level	Project-level		
HF II 20 - Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	4	1	4	5	13%
Regional project: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level ROMACTED (Regional)	2	2	0	4	4	11%
Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners	4	2	2	4	6	16%
HF II 33 - Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in BiH	2	4	1	5	6	16%
Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	2	0	6	6	16%
HF II 21 - Quality Education for All (BiH)	1	2	0	3	3	8%

Electoral support for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections	2	2	1	3	4	11%
Non-project specific (co-ordination and cross-cutting issues)	0	4	4	0	4	11%
Total interviews	16	22	9	29	38	100%
Percentage of total interviewees	42%	58%	24%	76%		

22. As the share of high-level and project-level interviews shows, it was particularly challenging to engage with participants who had an overall view of the Action Plan, beyond specific projects. A controlled snowballing process directed the interviewers mostly to participants at the project level. That is why the last group of interviews were done with CoE staff that had managerial and oversight responsibilities working across projects. These final interviews were particularly beneficial, as they allowed evaluators to follow up on a number of issues raised during the interviews with other CoE staff, donors and co-operation participants. Men were, on average, less responsive than women, which is reflected in the final gender distribution of interviewees that is slightly skewed towards women.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1 Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance and Effectiveness

2.1.1 *To what extent are the CoE's projects in line with the needs and priorities of the governmental institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina?*

23. CoE projects were all considered to be either **well or very well aligned** with the needs and priorities of the governmental institutions of BiH and the flagship initiatives of the EU strategy for the Western Balkans.
24. **The projects responded to the reform agenda of BiH.** The collaboration of the CoE and EU Delegation, together with the close co-operation with BiH authorities, yielded substantial results.
25. The CoE also **co-ordinated** closely with the UN for the projects to be in line with other national goals such as the SDGs. Further, projects did not arise *in vacuo* but sought to build on previous progress while avoiding overlap.
26. **The process of preparation of AP was conducted bilaterally between the CoE and the authorities in BiH.** There was wide co-ordination with other stakeholders. This early engagement approach strengthened stakeholders' accountability.

2.1.2 *To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan achieved their objectives?*

27. Objectives had **various levels of achievement**. Some projects were unclear on how to assess this, with an element of confusion between objectives and impact.
28. **Some projects fully met their objectives**, with measurable impacts, **which in some instances were considered to be 'revolutionary' and successful in 'overcoming initial scepticism'**. These projects elaborated appropriate and realistic expectations of what could be achieved and what not within their scope of activity.
29. **Some projects have only been recently completed or are still underway** with only preliminary indications of success. Other projects that were in early stages when the pandemic started had to shift their activities but in a way that did not jeopardise the projects. For some projects this shift included carrying out research activities and producing documents that were later used in online trainings and events.
30. The variety of institutional stakeholders, including the complex levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, created occasional frictions in project implementation and were considered a hindrance. Conversely, projects working on capacity building such as for example those delivering judicial education for professionals, did not face the challenge of political partisanship, and this was considered to have positively helped in the achievement of the goals.

2.1.3 *In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality (by mainstreaming gender)?*

31. **Gender mainstreaming as a component of the CoE's human rights approach was addressed in the development of the AP.** Most projects found the CoE Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) useful and relied on it, as well as on the resources provided by the CoE HQ. The GM Toolkit provided by the CoE which operationalises the GMS provides concrete ways on how to mainstream gender in co-operation activities.

32. HF20 and HF33 carried out gender analysis as the first step to mainstream gender resulting in activities such as the development of a booklet to support the beneficiaries in sensitisation of stakeholders in combating trafficking in human beings and to further increase their understanding of the gender dimension in all considerations of trafficking in human beings and anti-trafficking policies. The action integrated the gender dimension in a training on understanding trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation participants. The final draft on the phenomenon of child trafficking with a focus on the gender dimension was finalised. The CoE engaged a gender expert to work on the Guidelines for the integration of gender dimension into the Action Plans related to implementation of the Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020-2023 and in October 2020 the CoE presented the GM guidelines. Including the gender dimension assists in raising awareness on how different genders are vulnerable to specific types of trafficking and exploitation. The online presentation was considered very useful in enhancing the gender mainstreaming at the project level. Guidelines were adopted by relevant local institutions and their integration into local Action Plans to combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues.
33. **Gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue** was not always apparent at the project level. Respondents were not always clear on the links between the concepts and instruments and their implementation during the project. Some activities delivered for example anti-discrimination trainings, incorporated gender perspectives. However, it did not always translate into important contributions in raising awareness and reflecting gendered perspectives across projects.
34. **There is some uncertainty as to the contribution of projects in gender mainstreaming measures despite the GM toolkit and the documentary evidence stating that a gender perspective would be integrated.** This could be due to the fact that some respondents had not been part of the project design stage and therefore were not aware of the earlier activities undertaken to mainstream gender. Majority of respondents considered that impacts of gender mainstreaming would be reflected in the evidence of improved gender balance in participation rates in activities, the latter being in fact an objective on its own. Therefore, examples were mentioned where both men and women were included in all meetings relevant to the project. One project emphasised that they had conducted training on gender-based violence but could not elaborate on the contribution the training had in gender equality or what activities were carried out to mainstream gender in all stages. Another respondent considered the visibility campaign and a meeting with women CSO's in the Balkans to share best practices on increasing visibility and train already elected women to have contributed to enhancing gender mainstreaming.
35. While some projects used the opportunities offered by the pandemic to mainstream gender (more time available, addressing new needs that emerged for women, more deskwork, more money in absence of travel), **other projects made no specific provisions** on gender mainstreaming, either due to the fact that the focus of the project 'was not gender equality' or as a result of delays caused by the pandemic. One project that dealt with inclusion, stated that many failed to see gender and anti-discrimination as a basis for the project. One prison-based project utilised the gender mainstreaming toolkit but respondents considered that its application was naturally limited due to the gender segregation applied within the prison system. The application of the toolkit, in practice, was limited also due to other reasons, including staff where women are mainly employed in rehabilitation sector and administration, while men are employed predominantly in security sector, as well the fact that prisoners are predominantly men.
36. Equally some respondents from CSOs considered gender mainstreaming to be reflected in their equal gender balance ratio in the organisation but made no connection to how gender was mainstreamed in the project implementation.
37. This evaluation finds that Gender Mainstreaming as the reorganisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy process so that the gender perspective is incorporated at all levels of the project from

design to implementation and by all actors involved, was not fully understood at the local level. Despite evidence of gender mainstreaming, there is a lack of clarity among respondents at the local level in linking gender mainstreaming as a concept and the application of it at all stages of the project.

2.1.4 To what extent a has human rights approach been integrated in the project implementation?

38. Human rights are at the heart of the CoE activities. Projects naturally align to human rights standards and integrate **human rights principles into the design and implementation of the stages.**
39. While there is **high recognition that the work done by the CoE on integrating human rights principles at all stages**, the way(s) in which **projects had this implemented in practice are sometimes unclear** to project managers and staff. For example, one interviewee considered that there was no hindrance to full implementation of a human rights approach, indeed it had 'a very high level' of implementation of these standards. On further enquiry however, it was not possible for the interviewee to give specific examples of these standards or how they were implemented at different stages in the project life.
40. In one way or another, **all CoE projects incorporate human rights standards, and this was acknowledged by respondents in the evaluation.** Close engagement with CSOs at the project level is an example of the HRA integration in project implementation (also see par. 43). However, respondents at the local level were not clear on what HRA consist of despite being involved in activities that were based on human rights principles. Respondents at the project level, instead, considered trainings received on the basics of human rights to be the most important factors in making sure that human rights principles were an integral part of the project implementation throughout the duration of the project. Respondents in this evaluation noted that they benefited from examples where international standards were applied and they learned from experiences of other countries in relation to human rights, which they would reflect in how human rights principles were to be implemented in their projects.
41. Along with human rights being a core part in the design and implementation of the projects, participants in the evaluation noted that courses and materials offered through the **HELP platform** for distance learning and the human rights colloquium were of **high quality. These were useful in strengthening the understanding of human rights methodologies and principles that have been core in integrating human rights principles in project implementation.** Projects were conducted within a socio-political context which has seen active lobbying for human rights-based and victim-centred approaches.
42. This evaluation finds that the Human Rights Approach as consideration and implementation of principles of participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination, accountability and transparency and access to information at all stages of the projects was not clearly articulated at the project level. This is not to suggest that a HRA was not evident. It rather reflects a lack of clarity among respondents at the local level on how HRA as a complex set of principles is translated at the project level throughout its duration, from design to implementation, with it being more than the awareness of the project being naturally aligned to human rights.

2.1.5 To what extent have civil society organisations been integrated in project implementation?

43. **CSOs were fully engaged in the implementation of projects.** This is despite some perception of low activism in civil society in BiH. Despite there being no platform for CSO engagement at the level of the AP in the form of a steering committee, the CoE actively engaged CSOs at the project level.
44. **Engagement of CSOs is considered very important** due to their local knowledge and understanding of the needs of project participants. They are especially important for raising awareness of project activities. However, while CSOs are seen as reliable partners, some were found to need further capacity-building

before they could undertake the implementation of grant agreement covering activities such as prevention, awareness-raising, communicating practices.

45. **Projects enjoyed high levels of engagement and good co-operation with the CSO sector**, with some CSOs being included in projects typically in focus groups and roundtable discussions.
46. The institutions of government rely on CSOs, but **CSOs themselves feel they are not acknowledged as equal partners in that co-operation**. Within the AP, projects considered that it was important to have CSOs present and involved in consultations. Some respondents from CSOs however expressed a desire for more engagement with strategic discussions.

2.2 Evaluation Criterion 2: Coherence

2.2.1 *To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been internally co-ordinated and internal coherence assured?*

47. **Close interlinkages** between projects were identified especially within **sector areas** (i.e., Rule of Law and Justice), through the execution of the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the CPT. Some links were established among projects in the field of anti-discrimination, human rights and anti-trafficking, media and minorities. Co-ordination at the regional level was also evidenced.
48. The fact that stakeholders are part of steering committees of many projects across the AP is a factor that helps in the internal co-ordination assurance.
49. While the vast majority of projects are at least partly based on findings of CoE monitoring mechanisms respondents felt that more could be done to increase the links between projects and CoE instruments. Some projects found no co-ordination links at the implementation stage due to the single focus of their activities such as projects focussed on recording or translating. On one project it was noted that although standards had been set by the CoE and links established with the European Court of Human Rights, few linkages were maintained except on the issue of hate speech. Interlinkages were found in aspects of gender mainstreaming. Activities to maintain linkages included weekly meetings and personal contacts, participation in meetings and steering committees as well as co-ordination support and implementation support, while interlinkages with HELP were also noted.
50. Regular communication of project staff at the HQ with local staff assures that internal co-ordination is established where synergies among projects are found and overlaps are avoided.

2.2.2 *To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been co-ordinated with other institutions and donors, and how do co-ordination efforts address duplication?*

51. The CoE was considered to be 'many miles ahead' on the issue of co-ordination with other institutions and donors. **Co-ordination was particularly strong** in those projects where the organisation had extant relationships or in which there was already a level of activity at regional level. Co-ordination for coherence with the UN, the OSCE, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Election Observation Mission were particularly evidenced.
52. Assessments conducted during the programming state of projects drew upon in-depth discussions with a range of donors and organisations. There were regular meetings between different donors and regular contact was maintained to ensure co-ordination. Where there was no opportunity to carry out joint

activities, information exchange was maintained. Results and recommendations were presented jointly. Where promotion and dissemination were not directly funded as part of the project, resourceful ways were found to disseminate information by utilising partnerships with other organisations.

53. Co-ordination also enabled that various activities could be spread out and depending on implementation capacities and costs, they could be shared without causing duplication of efforts. Respondents in the evaluation have benefitted from expertise shared in joint activities even when this was done as part of a volunteering initiative such as, for example, in activities on countering violent extremism.
54. CoE **headquarters ensured co-ordination** with other institutions and donors at the project level was established and maintained, and direct access to standard setting bodies and secretariats of monitoring bodies was enabled. Co-ordination between country specific and regional actions have resulted in outputs such as establishing multi-agency forums.
55. **Duplication was avoided through various means** by organising donor co-ordination meetings every three months with the aim of preventing overlap with other projects. Projects implemented with EU funding do not overlap since the EU does not fund the same project for two organisations. Meetings with other organisations to discuss projects on specific areas also ensure there are no overlaps or duplication.

2.2.3 To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Action Plan?

56. **Overall, the CoE has been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action.** A key comparative advantage is that the CoE supports member states to progress on human rights issues since their engagement is legally binding. The CoE is also the standard-setting organisation for human rights issues. Gender mainstreaming is also a strength of the CoE as an institution, represented in its strategy which has provided useful guidance at the project level. The CoE's international reputation and intergovernmental approach gives it a comparative advantage.
57. The CoE is recognised among government and other stakeholders as an **authority and a strong partner whose initiatives are not politicised**. This has two aspects, in that the **CoE not only disseminates standards and practices but also supports their achievement**.
58. The pool of experts that the CoE brings to projects provides them with a high level of expertise in their activities. In this way, the CoE draws expertise from all CoE members, which enables the learning of efficient processes and brings best practices to project implementation at a level that would otherwise be unavailable. Similarly, the CoE has the ability to organise regional training and conferences which provides participants with a comparative viewpoint and a sharing of a wide variety of experiences. The importance of this was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.
59. The CoE is recognised for the quality of its work on human rights issues with **advantages in expertise, experience in co-operation and technical assistance in BiH**. Specifically, the Committee of Ministers as the decision-making body for the CoE that supervises the execution of the ECtHR judgments is considered extremely important.
60. The fact that AP projects benefit from stable long-term funding is considered an advantage to establishing and maintaining inter-linkages between projects and CoE instruments, as projects are not at risk of sudden withdrawal of or insecure funding.

61. These advantages strengthen project implementation and, through the **solid reputation of the CoE**, afford better access to authorities and decision makers, who are also motivated to achieve the standards set by the CoE because goals for social progress and the EU accession process of the country are aligned.

2.3 Evaluation Criterion 3: Efficiency and Added Value

2.3.1 *To what extent did the fact that a project was part of the Action Plan contribute to the achievement of project objectives?*

62. **The AP mostly contributed to achievement of project objectives.** A major contribution of the AP is its **role in attracting donor funding for CoE projects** which might not otherwise have received support. It provides a clear framework of activities which is attractive to donors who are often interested in backing a process that has been identified as important at a high level. Indeed, some donors will only provide funds against an AP and will not fund individual projects at all.
63. The **objectives of the AP have been well designed.** They have taken local needs into account, and consequently are highly relevant to the situation on the ground. This was achieved through collaboration with BiH institutions which approved and signed the AP, giving the individual projects greater credence in the eyes of the beneficiaries. For the ROMACTED project, evidence from field missions showed that close collaboration between the CoE local office and the beneficiaries has ensured that the actions are generally implemented in line with their needs.²
64. **The AP has a longer-term perspective than individual projects** and so enables better planning of CoE interventions. It assists higher-level decision makers to understand the interconnections between projects and supports a better co-ordination of activities. The AP provides a well-defined framework of thematic areas, which once approved are not subject to random change thus enabling improved planning of activities on the basis of certainty of objectives. It also provides a focus and commitment which insulates the CoE from the pressures of fluctuating short-term donor priorities. It furthermore obliges staff from different entities/departments to work together as a team, which enhances the efficiency of operations. For example, the project on Electoral Support for BiH benefited from support for the implementation of gender mainstreaming principles by working closely with the relevant CoE staff in Strasbourg within the framework of the AP. Similar collaborations were observed in other projects.
65. **The AP contributes to achievement of cross-cutting objectives.** Its broad scope facilitates the realisation of the objective to tackle transversal issues, which can be more easily identified and applied within the context of an AP. This also has the consequence that CoE management is more easily able to appoint Advisors dealing with such cross-cutting objectives. Nevertheless, this is not always visible at project level (see paragraphs 31-34 above). Moreover, differences in outcomes for men and women are not effectively monitored and evaluated (see paragraphs 82-84 below).
66. **However, the AP had some limitations. The AP is not widely visible or considered relevant to some actors on the ground.** Some beneficiaries did not consider the AP to be a relevant guiding document, and were unaware of its practical implications. This potentially detracts from the cross-project synergies and opportunities for mutual learning. Consequently, the role of visibility and communications of the advantages of the AP should be recognised as an important area for future improvement.
67. Projects financed through the Horizontal Facility (HF) would likely have been financed through that channel in any case, and so the AP did not leverage additional financial resources to the HF projects themselves.

² O'Connor, S. 2017. ROM Report [internal evaluation report], Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

On the other hand, since the Horizontal Facility is part of the Action Plan it contributes significantly to AP implementation. The AP therefore provides added value in a practical way by integrating HF projects into the wider framework of CoE projects within BiH.

2.3.2 What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic related restriction measures on the Action Plan implementation and how did the CoE adapt?

68. **COVID-19 response was effective and mitigated the impact on project activities.** The COVID-19 crisis has tested the flexibility of stakeholders, affecting most organisations efficiency for at least the first two months. It also opened a new door for creativity and quick thinking in their approach. The CoE management and field operations adapted rapidly to the restrictions imposed as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.
69. **The overall impact was minimised by effective mitigating actions.** Project teams managed to minimise the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the achievement of objectives by transitioning from face-to-face meetings to online meetings through video links. For the most part, project teams adapted effectively to online working. Online workshops and courses such as HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal professionals) were well organised and were largely effective. Where necessary, trainers received customised instruction on how to run online training sessions. Work plans were adapted in co-operation with the beneficiaries. Mitigation measures adopted for projects within the umbrella of the HF were also helpful, demonstrating the usefulness of inter-agency collaboration. In the Quality Education for All action, a risk management contingency plan was put in place with a revised work plan. This enabled the action to proceed with implementation with no negative effects on progress. Certain activities planned for the months of March–June 2020 that could not be carried out, were replaced with other activities that were not prevented by the COVID-19 restrictions.
70. A survey organised by the ODGP which targeted the field found that **about 85% of the planned activities were implemented despite the COVID-related restrictions.** The move online also brought some unexpected benefits in itself for instance in online workshops where beneficiaries established connections with each other and discussion flourished, for example in the Quality Education for All action. Regional online initiatives were also developed, such as five regional democratic chat rooms for secondary students in BiH, Montenegro and Serbia. A way has been found to translate these challenging circumstances into a positive approach.
71. In projects where face-to-face meetings were critical to project implementation and success, **project activities were postponed until the summer.** In such projects, some activities were cancelled, and study tours postponed. This meant that funds for travel and in-person activities were underspent, providing opportunities for appropriate budgetary reallocations at a later date. An example is the postponement of inter-professional seminars in the Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media action that were planned for March and April 2020 but were postponed due to COVID-19 until the end of May 2020. Where possible, the training activities were eventually organised as hybrid events, combining online and in-person presence of participants. International experts as well as Council of Europe staff members participated online, whilst members of the judiciary and local experts participated in person. The hybrid format enabled the action's seminars to maintain their interactive and practically oriented methodology. As another example, the action on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings applied great flexibility and made prompt adjustments to the work plan, and deadlines for some activities were extended. The HELP online anti-trafficking courses were used effectively to provide additional training opportunities in May that had not originally been envisaged in the work plan.
72. Despite COVID-19 response, there was a **negative impact on project delivery in some cases. Reduced personal contact negatively impacted project outputs in some cases.** For some projects, changes to working methods led to a deterioration or loss in interpersonal relations which negatively affected project

achievement. In such cases, group dynamics were lost due to self-isolation and lack of contact with beneficiaries and a lack of IT skills. Difficulties were also experienced in the implementation of projects that involved disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, especially Roma, where online communication was impractical; in such cases, staff were often impelled to use less effective forms of communication such as telephones. Nevertheless, such projects found ways to accommodate workplans to address new specific needs of these groups. Several interviewees commented that they were keen to resume face-to-face meetings, due to the difficulty of achieving the same results online as in-person communication.

73. **Difficulties in adapting to new technologies also had some adverse effects.** One project experienced difficulty in implementing video meetings using local institutional software which did not allow for translation; translators had to be hired which raised project costs and reduced the quality of the training offered. However, this was an exception, since all other projects implemented by the CoE managed to use video conferencing effectively. Despite that, a lack of technical equipment available to beneficiaries for online communication caused difficulties in some cases. Online meetings were difficult to maintain when internet connection in BiH was not always reliable. While the CoE adapted valiantly to the COVID-19 crisis, **working from home had an adverse effect on mental health and well-being of some CoE staff.** In such cases the use of online video communication added to the burden of work, while the effectiveness of project activities inevitably decreased.

2.3.3 To what extent are the costs proportionate to outputs and outcomes?

74. **Project costs are mostly proportionate to outputs and outcomes.** Most project outcomes are intangible or long term and cannot easily be measured. Therefore, the prudent expenditure of funds on project outputs is the main metric for measuring cost effectiveness. Most projects are mindful of making responsible expenditure decisions and take into account the value for money of project activities. **In the view of most interviewees the costs were proportionate to the outputs,** especially considering the number and quality of training activities.
75. **Special considerations apply to projects with complex management structures.** For example, the three layers of management involved in the ROMACTED project (an EU/CoE joint programme outside the Horizontal Facility) are a relatively costly and time-consuming arrangement. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that it has thus far proven to be both efficient and effective in delivering its objectives.
76. Similarly, the project design whereby some project managers are based in Strasbourg can have an adverse impact on project effectiveness and efficiency. For example, the project on Electoral Support for BiH for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections was in this position; the project manager based in Strasbourg was not in a position to assist with some technical issues in implementation which caused some additional administrative costs for project implementation.
77. **Flexible budgeting and resource allocation have led to cost savings.** In one project, the budget was changed several times with funds reallocated from publications to training activities and savings in travel budget lines due to home-working and remote video-conferencing. Due to the limitation on project activities during the COVID-19 crisis, especially through reduced travel and the postponement of some activities, funds have often been underspent in relation to planned budgets. This should enable additional training activities to take place in 2021 beyond the expected level. Projects were able to maintain activities through the use of online technologies. In other projects, local consultants were substituted for international consultants, bringing savings to the budget. Such savings against planned budgets could support investment in IT technologies which should in turn enable efficiency savings in the future. The flexibility in changing budgeting during the COVID-19 crisis significantly benefited certain projects, such as ROMACTED and in the field of anti-discrimination. Having the flexibility to reroute funds to other appropriate expenditures and to reach out to citizens from vulnerable groups impacted by the pandemic

was opportune, as it addressed real needs and as a result the CoE was recognised by the community as a commendable donor.

78. Despite positive achievements in some cases costs are not proportionate, because **project managers sometimes lack management and budgeting skills**. The capacity of the staff and the set-up of project teams is a major determinant of cost efficiency. Some projects were underfunded leading to perceptions of inefficiency due to the inability to complete all tasks on time. In a few projects, funds were also not well allocated and failed to target real needs on the ground. Projects could in some cases be implemented with lower costs than are in the budget. The main constraint on project implementation is in most cases not financial constraints but rather the limited human resource capacity to implement projects with multiple objectives and needs. More attention could be given to the analysis of cost effectiveness of projects, taking into account both financial and human resources available in relation to expected project outputs and outcomes.

2.4 Evaluation Criterion 4: Impact and Sustainability

2.4.1 To what extent has the Council of Europe contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

79. Within the **human rights pillar**, there is a **high appreciation among stakeholders of the sustainability efforts made to date**. Setting and introducing standards, sharing information among stakeholders on key issues in combating human trafficking, and focusing energy on developing institutional capacities using good practice from other projects are all highlighted as enabling factors in supporting sustainability. Furthermore, the CoE is credited with helping to reorganise the system of identifying victims of human trafficking. In the field of Roma integration, the ROMACTED project is recognised for its contribution to the National Roma Action Plan thus making its outcomes sustainable. Some stakeholders refer to important limits, notably lack of continuity and political stability in institutions dealing with human rights issues.
80. Within the **rule of law pillar**, **sustainability is a more challenging issue**. There has been notable progress, e.g., training the trainers is a way of ensuring sustainability, and legal training helped to 'plant the seeds of change' in institutions dealing with the continuous education of legal and media professionals, as well as in getting three key ministries to work on structured sentence reform, and harmonising legal training in the judiciary. There are, however, ongoing issues with hate speech and hate crimes, notably with regards to the LGBTI community and the effects on journalists, while the volatility of political processes is a constant threat to sustainability. A number of stakeholders across all projects raise the issue of an absence of political will as well as the political instability of the country as important impediments to sustainability and impact; albeit they remain external to the AP, they warrant due consideration in the planning and implementation process as long-term influences on the AP's impact and sustainability.
81. Within the **democracy pillar**, stakeholders note **both positive and negative aspects of the AP's impact and sustainability**. Recommendations and a roadmap for inclusive education, developed with the assistance of the Quality Education for All action, are cited as an example of tangible positive impact with good sustainability potential. On the other hand, sustainability with regards to electoral reform is not clear to many stakeholders - the ongoing reform process is complex and its future uncertain. Project documentation also reveals that in order to achieve sustainable results in such a sensitive area as the electoral domain, a clear strategic vision and close co-ordination with authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina and major stakeholders is essential. This further confirms the significant impact of external factors on sustainability of reforms supported by the AP.
82. Although achieving full sustainability lies largely outside the CoE's remit (see comments on political instability and political will above), **CoE adeptly uses all instruments at its disposal** to closely monitor the progress of reforms in the fields of AP intervention.

83. Documentary review reveals that **monitoring activities** include activities of its statutory bodies such as PACE (PACE rapporteurs) and the Secretary General as well as thematic monitoring bodies - e.g. the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (monitoring on the basis of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, every seven years) or the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), that conducted the first monitoring of the Istanbul Convention since Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the CoE, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). The CoE also regularly liaises with other international organisations on areas of shared concern. Responsible bodies working with the AP also regularly consult relevant CoE evaluation reports.
84. One of the limitations of AP sustainability and monitoring is the fact that different frameworks have **different monitoring cycles**, from one to seven years, making alignment between policy and project work difficult.
85. One of the most serious risks to the implementation and sustainability of the AP is the **lack of sufficient financial resources** for sustained work in crucial areas, such as the fight against corruption and money laundering, justice, data protection, good governance at local level and higher education reform. The CoE tries to remedy this through an ongoing dialogue with donors, notably the European Union through the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey”.
86. A policy area with a **track record of success and sustainability** most commonly referred to by both stakeholders and in documents reviewed is Bosnia’s **penitentiary system**, where the CoE is active through several projects. Thanks to a specific statutory mechanism - CPT - and the subsequent recommendations, it benefits from frequent and regular monitoring. According to a number of stakeholders, the CoE is widely associated with conceiving and training penitentiary management and staff, a testimony of the relationship with the authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.4.2 Did the Action Plan have different outcomes for men and women?

87. **AP project planning does not comprehensively consider different outcomes for men and women.** Project documentation does not comprehensively capture and disaggregate possible and actual outcomes for men and women. Documentary evidence across all seven sample projects reveals that differences in outcomes were not a major consideration in project planning. There is some evidence of gender-sensitive AP planning (see section 2.1.3) but this is not pertinent to outcome identification. Gender mainstreaming mainly concerns planning and implementation, without a clear focus on possible (and unintended) outcomes for men and women.
88. **Stakeholders have a very limited insight into different outcomes for men and women.** Among all the stakeholders interviewed, only a few were able to offer meaningful insights into different outcomes for men and women; this was only the case for three out of the seven sample projects.
89. There is a **certain degree of ‘gender blindness’** in AP outcome and impact assessment (due to the factors listed above) as there is no evidence of a gender-sensitive approach to outcomes. Project staff and other stakeholders frequently make assumptions about outcomes for men and women on the basis of their individual insights and not on the basis of project monitoring and reporting evidence. This may lead to poorly informed conclusions on the nature of project outcomes and further obscure differences in outcomes for men and women.

2.4.3 Have the outcomes built on the results already achieved under the first Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017?

90. Across the entire sample of AP projects reviewed by the evaluation, there is **overwhelming evidence of outcomes of the current AP building on the previous Action Plan**. This includes stakeholder interviews and project documents.

91. **AP projects building on the 2015-2017 AP** include: the electoral support project, building on a similar initiative run before the 2016 elections. AP electoral activity planning considers the current and previous election cycles. The CoE also looked at expertise in other countries (notably, Georgia) in successful electoral reform; the action on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina builds on the JUFREX 1 project; both the Roma integration activities and prison reform programmes, considered to be the most impactful and sustainable, build on work done under the previous AP. In a similar fashion, the legal certainty project built on similar work done during the first AP implementation.
92. Even for newly added AP projects (not included in the previous AP), there is **some evidence of using previous project experiences** gathered by CoE in education and inclusion work in BiH.
93. Council of Europe worked with the European Union on Phase II of the **Horizontal Facility** to continue from 2019 to 2022, building upon and ensuring sustainability of the results of Phase I.

2.5 Evaluation Criterion 5: Visibility

2.5.1 To what extent has the Council of Europe visibility been ensured in the Action Plan implementation?

94. The AP relies largely on **traditional online dissemination tools**, notably the website of CoE Office in Sarajevo, which continued to be the main communication tool and source of information about the activities and interventions implemented in BiH covered by the AP.
95. Visibility activities pertaining to actions supported by the EU/CoE **Horizontal Facility** stand out as the most resourced and referenced communication efforts among AP actions. In 2020, the Horizontal Facility website received more than 46,000 visits. Crucially, the website was translated into local languages which led to increased visitor numbers.
96. The Council of Europe enjoys **substantial coverage and visibility through the communication tools offered by the Horizontal Facility** on social media, notably through the Horizontal Facility Facebook page with over 5000 likes and over 1.5 million visitors in 2020, a Twitter account with nearly 1000 followers and more than 485,000 impressions. Whilst it is impossible to assess the exact number of Bosnian users and visitors, CoE documents note that 'some of the most visible posts were related to the actions implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Furthermore, audiences from Bosnia and Herzegovina are among the most active ones on Horizontal Facility Facebook page
97. **Donor visibility** remained highest for HF actions, where stakeholders and documentary evidence show high levels of CoE and EU visibility. There is no evidence of other donor visibility in other AP projects (donors are referred to when it comes to earmarked funding but not necessarily when it comes to the non-earmarked funding – this is part of the contractual visibility obligations agreed between CoE and donors).
98. The Council of Europe has a **limited, albeit growing standalone presence on social media** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including a Facebook page of the field office with over 4600 likes and no other active social media channels.
99. Numerous AP activities reported in local media contribute to the visibility of the CoE. This includes a range of **media products and channels** such as:
- 99.1. TV and radio show broadcasted at the local and national level discussing topics such as gender-based violence, women's rights, discrimination and hate speech towards Roma people/women.
- 99.2. Documentaries featuring members of various vulnerable groups, who were invited to share their experiences were disseminated through local media and a local news portal, including a

documentary showing stories of five empowered and successful Roma women/girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina was produced aiming to send the message to others that even though Roma women and girls suffer multiple discrimination, success is possible. The documentary gained wide attention on social media and is available on YouTube but has been viewed only 100 times (as of February 20, 2021).

- 99.3. One of the documentaries produced within the Horizontal Facility I action (“When we are fewer”) was screened during Sarajevo Film Festival in August 2019. This documentary has been screened also in several schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2020 and it has been recognised as an example of good communication practice also by the EU, as it brings stories of the members of national minorities to the spotlight.
- 99.4. TV discussions on topics of CoE activities such as on hate speech, reconciliation, LGBTI rights, women’s rights.
- 99.5. Media articles in print media and on online portals.
100. Assessment of visibility methods is restricted by **limited monitoring** within projects and at country level; whilst social media allow for basic tracking of readership, this is only partially possible for TV media (only Bosnian national channels track their viewer numbers); furthermore, no active tracking of audiences and impact of visibility measures is conducted at project or country level (other than basic social media usage statistics collected via Facebook).
101. Within the Horizontal Facility actions implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, monitoring of visibility results is conducted a regular basis and reported on in narrative synopsis reports, as well as in annual reports. These reports consist of the data on online indicators (website visits, bounce rate, most visited pages; Facebook and Twitter statistics on the engagement rate, audiences and most successful posts), newsletter success rates (including data on opening rate, most read articles and new subscriptions to the newsletter), traditional media monitoring following any visibility event. In addition to that, dissemination of materials within individual actions is done by the project teams and dissemination of publications and other resources produced within the actions is done in accordance with the visibility plans, targeting interested audiences, mostly in the circles of professionals and beneficiary institutions.
102. Visibility of the Action Plan remains restricted to the **donor community and institutional stakeholders**, notably at higher levels of management; in communication with those stakeholders, AP and CoE visibility go hand in hand and there is no evidence of added value of the Action Plan in public communication terms.
103. AP lacks the requirement for **individual project-based communication plans in all projects**. HF funded actions have communication plans but this is a result of EU requirements. EUD checks HF communication plans and provides feedback, but this is not aligned between projects nor with the AP as a whole. The Quality Education for All action stands out as a communication success story, with good engagement of the communities, stakeholders as well as the government. Other projects have mixed experiences with communication engagements. The AP **lacks a comprehensive approach to visibility and communication**. This is not aided by the fact that the AP does not have a steering committee, lowering the overall visibility and communication potential. Lack of a communication strategy and dedicated AP communication budget further limit the visibility of both the AP and the Council of Europe.

2.5.2 *Were citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences sufficiently updated on the outcomes and benefits of the projects?*

104. Although basic information on AP projects is available to the wider public on CoE websites, and numerous materials are translated into the local language, there is **little evidence of a comprehensive communication effort** to the communities where projects take place.
105. Stakeholders across the board report **low levels of satisfaction with public outreach**; this is reported to be linked to several unrelated reasons; the first and most commonly encountered are low communication budgets, low prioritisation of public outreach as well as lack of engaging communication tools, relying largely on standard approaches such as conferences, meetings and press releases, as well as limitations in public communication due to COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions and absence of face to face interaction with the public.
106. Although AP projects use existing communications resources (financial and otherwise) efficiently, stakeholders across all project samples noted a **lack of sufficient resources** (both in terms of funds and human resources) to deal with public outreach, notably considering pandemic restrictions, where new methods and approaches have to be sought.
107. The **absence of a comprehensive communication strategy** was noted as a contributing factor to the limited public outreach.
108. Furthermore, a **general low level of awareness of CoE** and distinction between CoE and EU as well as other donors was noted by some stakeholders as an impediment to effective public communication (additional efforts required to overcome the lack of CoE awareness in the first place).
109. Some sample projects provide **limited insight into public engagement** due to their specific and limited scope (e.g. the prison reform project, or judiciary training).

2.6 Rated Questions

110. During each interview, the interviewees were asked a set of three standardised rated questions in order to gain an overview perspective of perceptions of the relevance of the AP to individual projects, the importance of the projects to furthering democratic reforms in BiH and the effectiveness of the CoE in supporting individual projects. Each question was scored on a scale of 1-5, on a range from a minimum of 1 indicating not at all relevant, important or effective, to a maximum of 5 indicating extremely relevant, important or effective. The results of this small survey are as follows:
- 110.1. **Relevance** of the Action Plan to individual projects: **4.41/5** (N=29, SD=0.682)
- 110.2. **Importance** of individual projects to democratic reforms: **4.49/5** (N=37, SD=0.651)
- 110.3. **Effectiveness** of CoE in supporting individual projects: **4.51/5** (N=37, SD=0.559)
111. The surveys were carried out with 38 respondents. One respondent did not wish to provide an answer, so the overall number of usable surveys was N=37. Question A was not relevant for the high-level interviews, and so the number of respondents for that question was just N=29.
112. The results of this small survey indicate that **interviewed stakeholders generally see the role of the AP as relevant to the performance of individual projects**, but that the project-specific benefits and CoE support are rated as slightly more important and effective than the AP itself. However, the standard deviations of the responses are relatively wide and so the differences in means are not statistically

significant. The main message is that the AP is highly appreciated, and its relevance is confirmed by the results of the survey.

113. Nevertheless, the somewhat lower mean and higher standard deviation of the answers concerning the relevance of the AP to individual projects indicates a possibly lesser consensus of opinion concerning the AP itself compared to the project-level results. This reinforces the points made above concerning the **need to improve the visibility of the AP and to have a wider discussion with stakeholders about ways to further improve its relevance to the CoE's activities in BiH.**
114. The relatively high score regarding the effectiveness of the CoE in supporting individual projects should provide **reassurance that the CoE activities themselves are on the right track and are highly regarded by stakeholders and participants** with a relatively high degree of consensus.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance and Effectiveness

115. The evaluation concludes that **CoE projects are highly aligned with the needs and priorities of the governmental institutions of BiH and the flagship initiatives of the EU strategy for the Western Balkans**. Project preparations were bilateral and there was a good level of co-ordination. Collaboration of the CoE and EU Delegation together with close co-operation with the BiH authorities achieved significant results. The CoE co-ordinated closely with the UN for the projects to be also aligned with other national goals as articulated in the SDGs.
116. The evaluation concludes **that projects implemented in the framework of the AP achieved their objectives at varying degrees**. Some projects fully met their objectives, with measurable impacts. Other projects await evaluation of results. Some interviewees were unclear on how to assess this, with an element of confusion between project objectives and impact also due to the different timing among projects, which is however to be expected. Achievement of objectives and its speed is affected by the complex layers of government in BiH.
117. **Gender mainstreaming as a component of CoE's human rights approach was addressed in the development of the AP**. The CoE engaged a gender expert to work on the gender mainstreaming guidelines. The CoE Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) and the GM Toolkit provided clear guidance on gender mainstreaming and are useful resources to guide and inform projects at all levels and stages.
118. Gender mainstreaming in project implementation however was **medium** and there seem to be confusion between gender mainstreaming and gender representation. Some projects either did not find it applicable, made no specific provisions, were not aware of prior actions taken to mainstream gender or did not know how to assess the project's contribution to gender mainstreaming. The extent to which projects mainstreamed gender in the monitoring and evaluation phase was **low**. Some respondents considered participation rates for men and women in their project activities to be an indicator of gender mainstreaming as a proxy for gender equality. While there may be some validity in this confusion of concepts and practices by respondents in this evaluation, as one could not fully achieve gender mainstreaming without including women at all stages of the project so that their perspectives are taken into consideration, it does not however reflect a correct understanding of the processes of gender mainstreaming and how they contribute to gender equality as indeed the CoE has assured through its documentary evidence.
119. The **human rights approach** was an integral part of the projects to **a high degree and stands at the core of CoE activities**. While little evidence was elaborated on the details of how human rights principles were integrated at the design stage of the projects, the role of human rights training and other educational activities has certainly contributed for such principles to become part of project implementation. Respondents in this evaluation assessed that examples where international standards were applied and learning was delivered drawing from experiences of other countries in relation to human rights. While human rights education via the HELP platform and the colloquium on human rights are not the indicator against which to assess evidence on human right approach at the project level, respondents praised them for strengthening awareness about human rights among project staff.
120. The evaluation concludes that projects enjoyed **high levels of engagement** and good co-operation with the CSO sector. Partnership with CSOs is considered very important and in this regard further capacity building is needed for some CSOs to strengthen and sustain the partnership. There is interest by CSOs to be engaged as partners also in strategic discussions.

121. Most respondents in this evaluation while accepting the human rights are core to the project activities, could not however distinguish how this was incorporated at all project stages. Gaps in the shared understanding of the terminology regarding human rights approach, principles and standards appears to be more a reflection of a confusion on the meaning of these terms rather than in the practice of it.

3.2 Evaluation Criterion 2: Coherence

122. Projects implemented in the framework of the AP were found to have a **varying degree of internal co-ordination**. Good co-ordination was noted in the fields of anti-discrimination and hate speech, human rights and anti-trafficking, media and minorities. Co-ordination among projects was weak in other areas especially for projects that focused on capacity-building or where co-ordination included simply exchange of information or translation of material. Coherence in implementation of the projects and synergies across the projects were overseen by field staff. Mechanisms in place facilitated meetings, information sharing and support across projects between headquarters and the field office. However, co-ordination was particularly strong in those projects where the organisation had extant relationships or in which there was already a level of activity at regional level. Close links were developed among sector areas. However, few linkages were developed among projects and CoE instruments and it was felt that more could be done in regard to establishing links within a regional approach.

123. CoE headquarters ensured **overall coherence with the monitoring bodies and intergovernmental authorities**. Co-ordination of projects implemented in the framework of the AP with other institutions was highly fruitful. Duplication was avoided through various means such as organising donor co-ordination meetings, communication, and regular reporting.

124. The evaluation concludes that overall, the CoE has been **able to a high extent to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action**. This advantage arises from the CoE's capacities to not only disseminate standards and practices but also to support their achievement. This is strengthened by the expertise the CoE can draw upon to support local stakeholders and the high reputation the CoE enjoys with the BiH authorities.

3.3 Evaluation Criterion 3: Efficiency and Added Value

125. The evaluation concludes that the AP contributed to the achievement of projects' objectives **to a large extent**, having long-term objectives, being well designed and attracting donor funding for CoE projects that otherwise might not have received support. Projects within the AP are generally in line with the needs of beneficiaries, a process facilitated by the ownership of the AP by the Institutions of BiH who participated in its design. Moreover, the AP facilitated the implementation of cross-cutting issues which might not have been possible through a collection of independent projects. However, it lacked visibility on the ground while some projects would have received finance from the EU with or without the AP.

126. The actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic **were highly effective** in mitigating most of the potential negative impact on project activities. Face-to-face meetings were replaced with online meetings while other activities were postponed, and the associated funds reallocated. An increased amount of funds were reallocated to CSOs, to bridge gaps in operations at the local level during the pandemic, and ensure contributing to the reduction of stigmatisation of vulnerable groups. However, for some projects online meetings were no substitute for personal contacts, and these projects suffered in consequence, while the new technologies could not be accessed by all beneficiary groups. It is estimated that planned activities were overall reduced by around 15%, according to a survey conducted by CoE staff based in Strasbourg.

127. The project costs were **mostly proportionate to project outputs and outcomes**, although since the latter are often intangible or long term, direct attribution of cost-effectiveness cannot be made with certainty. The complex tiers of administration between Strasbourg and Sarajevo are seen as cumbersome

and costly in terms of the management time involved for individual projects, although they are thought to be cost effective in practice in accounting terms and procedures of financial approval and control. Flexible budgeting has led to cost savings especially in respect of mitigation measures taken in response to the pandemic. Reallocation of savings into productive and welfare-enhancing activities was a commendable aspect of the project financial management, although the project management staff often lacked budgeting skills. Overall, deployment of human resources in terms of limited numbers of personnel was a greater constraint on project implementation than financial resources.

3.4 Evaluation Criterion 4: Impact and Sustainability

128. The evaluation concludes that the Action Plan contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina to **a significant extent**. Most of the AP projects researched within this evaluation have a good chance of being sustained over time and contribute to sustainable implementation over time.
129. The evaluation further concludes that many aspects of reform sustainability are **dependent on external factors** beyond CoE's control, notably political stability of BiH and political will to reform.
130. The evaluation concludes that although in most projects there were **no major differences** in outcomes for men and women, the insufficient nature of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms differentiating between outcomes for men and women partially obscures an accurate assessment of this aspect of the AP.
131. The evaluation concludes that the AP 2018-2021 builds on the experiences of the previous AP to **a high extent**, with numerous projects reporting lessons learnt from the previous AP as a basis for their current planning and implementation.

3.5 Evaluation Criterion 5: Visibility

132. The evaluation concludes that the AP ensured the **visibility of the CoE to a high extent**, considering the limited resources committed to visibility. However, numerous stakeholders as well as documentary sources confirm that there is a potential for higher visibility if appropriate resources were to be committed to this aspect of the AP.
133. The evaluation concludes that citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences were **not sufficiently updated** on the outcomes and benefits of the AP projects.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Evaluation Criterion 1: Relevance and Effectiveness

134. The CoE should build on its positive achievements to continue ensuring that **projects in the AP remain closely aligned with the needs and priorities of governmental institutions** of BiH and the EU strategy for the Western Balkans.
135. Following on the success of engaging with CSOs at the project level, the CoE might benefit by widening the partnership **with civil society organisations of proven capacity to benefit as observers or participants at the strategic level**.
136. To further encourage CSO's voice in planning and decision making the CoE should assess the viability of setting up a **steering committee for the AP** to involve civil society organisations, when the conditions in the country permit.

137. The AP preparation process needs to ensure that **projects are clear on not only the objectives set, but also on how to measure their achievements.**
138. The CoE should utilise their comparative advantages to **strengthen gender mainstreaming.** This could be done by translating the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and the checklists for reporting into the project level activities and in assessing the project's contribution to gender equality at all stages. CoE should make sure that the concepts and practices of gender mainstreaming, gender equality and gender sensitive approach are not lost in the gap of translating theory to practice, but are fully understood and implemented by staff at the project level. This means that a shared understanding is achieved by all parties at all stages of the project life cycle so that CoE achievements in gender mainstreaming are evidenced and credit is given where credit is due.
139. The CoE could **strengthen** its work on raising **awareness of human rights approach**, standards and principles at the project level, from design to implementation in order to improve clarity on these concepts and how they can become an integral part of the projects at all stages. This is important as lack of clarity and a shared understanding by all parties at all levels, risks that CoE strengths and achievements in the field of human rights approach appear somewhat blurred because of the gaps in the shared understanding between the CoE HQ, project staff and project partners.
140. Making sure that a shared and coherent understanding of both HRA and GM is achieved and maintained is crucial as it has wider and sustained effects at all levels and for all parties that the CoE engages with via its AP projects, which will in turn contribute to the achievement of the goals that the CoE is working towards in the country.

4.2 Evaluation Criterion 2: Coherence

141. The CoE should continue to **strengthen the mechanisms that ensure internal co-ordination and coherence** across AP projects. This could include joint activities and sharing of lessons learned to also include projects that are not well linked with other projects or topics across the AP.
142. The CoE should **build on existing synergies between national and regional projects** and use its comparative advantage in the regional dimension where positive outcomes are found to be sustainable and beyond the life cycle of a project.
143. The CoE should continue to **improve linkages between projects and CoE instruments.**
144. The CoE should continue to ensure that **mechanisms of co-ordination and coherence of projects within the AP with other institutions and donors** are enabled.

4.3 Evaluation Criterion 3: Efficiency and Added Value

145. **The AP framework provides an effective means of ensuring efficiency and added value** of projects and should be continued in the future as a primary means of organising CoE projects in BiH. However, the limited visibility of the AP, as discussed in this report, detracts from the added value of projects by limiting cross-project synergies.
146. **The use of digital technologies to reduce costs of travel should become an accepted practice in the future**, where appropriate and justified. The use of video-conferencing introduced to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was highly effective for projects where reduced interpersonal contact did not have adverse impacts on group dynamics. For some projects and activities, especially with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, personal contact is at the core of the CoE's value added, and

this practice will need to be maintained as far as possible. However, it should be recognised that enhanced use of digital technologies can lead to cost savings and release resources which could be redeployed to support other activities.

147. While projects were on the whole cost effective, it was reported to the evaluators that some project teams lack budgeting skills despite the availability of a budget tool that is available to guide users and the support of financial services staff to support project teams in the field. Therefore, from a strategic point of view, **more attention should be given to the analysis of cost effectiveness of projects** by the central management teams in the future, taking account of both financial and human resource deployment and allocations.
148. The CoE should **allocate a BiH-based contact point**, even if on a part-time basis, for the occasional projects where this has not been possible in the past (for example for regional projects and projects with little funding).

4.4 Evaluation Criterion 4: Impact and Sustainability

149. The CoE should continue using **all monitoring tools available** to enhance sustainability and impact of the Action Plan, including those at country level and specific to the AP (e.g. reporting) and Council of Europe level (e.g. GREVIO, PACE, ECRI).
150. The CoE should encourage **multi-stakeholder approaches** at all stages of the AP cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and at all levels of AP implementation (European, national, local).

4.5 Evaluation Criterion 5: Visibility

151. The CoE should devise a **comprehensive communication strategy** for the next Action Plan, ensure coherent implementation of communication measures across all AP projects and ensure its implementation throughout the next AP with appropriate **communication strategy monitoring and evaluation**.
152. Planning of the AP communication strategy should also be **co-ordinated with other significant donors and programmes** such as the EU/CoE Horizontal Facility or its successors, and actively involve the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entity governments.
153. The Council of Europe should consider developing an **AP public engagement and public outreach plan** for each AP project, **co-ordinated with the AP communication strategy**. The plan should consider available resources and communication objectives and clearly state the objectives and limitations of public engagement of each AP project.

Annexe 1. Evaluation Questions

1. Relevance and Effectiveness

- 1.1. To what extent are the Council of Europe's projects in line with the needs and priorities of the governmental institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- 1.2. To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan achieved their objectives?
- 1.3. Which factors have supported and hindered the effectiveness of the projects?
- 1.4. In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality (by mainstreaming gender)?
- 1.5. To what extent a human rights-based approach has been integrated in the project implementation?
- 1.6. To what extent Civil Society Organisations have been integrated in the project implementation?
- 1.7. To what extent have the project teams in the framework of the Action Plan been able to adapt their working methods and approach to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions?

2. Coherence

- 2.1. To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been internally coordinated and internal coherence assured?
- 2.2. To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been coordinated with other institutions and donors, including the Horizontal Facility, and how do coordination efforts address duplication?
- 2.3. To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Action Plan?

3. Efficiency and Added Value

- 3.1. To what extent did the fact that a project was part of the Action Plan contribute to the achievement of project objectives?
- 3.2. What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic related restriction measures on the Action Plan implementation?
- 3.3. To what extent are the costs proportionate to outputs and outcomes?

4. Impact and Sustainability

- 4.1. To what extent has the Council of Europe contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- 4.2. Did the Action Plan have different outcomes for men and women?
- 4.3. Have the outcomes built on the results already achieved under the first Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017?

5. Visibility

- 5.1. To what extent has the Council of Europe visibility been ensured in the implementation of the Action Plan, in line with the agreed visibility rules?
- 5.2. Were citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences sufficiently updated on the outcomes and benefits of the projects?

Annexe 2. Semi-structured Interviews Questionnaires

High-Level Questionnaire

1. *Relevance and Effectiveness*

- 1.1 To what extent are the Council of Europe's projects in the AP in line with the needs and priorities of the governmental institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina?
 - To what extent is the intervention coherent with the EU Strategy for the Western Balkans?
 - To what extent does the Action Plan assist and facilitate Bosnia and Herzegovina to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - To what extent are the projects in the AP in line with the CoE strategic triangle of standard setting, monitoring and cooperation?
- 1.2 To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan achieved their objectives?
 - Which factors have supported/hindered their effectiveness?
- 1.3 In what way has gender equality been mainstreamed through the AP?
 - What factors have supported/hindered this during implementation?
 - Were any changes made during implementation to facilitate mainstreaming?
- 1.4 To what extent has a human rights-based approach been integrated in the AP?
 - What factors have supported/hindered this during implementation?
 - Were any changes made during implementation to facilitate this?
- 1.5 To what extent have civil society organisations been integrated in the AP?
 - What factors have supported/hindered this during implementation?
 - Were any changes made during implementation to facilitate this?
- 1.6 To what extent has the AP been affected and adapted to COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions?
 - What factors supported/hindered this adaptation? Please provide examples.
 - What specific changes in the AP took place as a result?

2. *Coherence*

- 2.1 To what extent have the projects implemented within the framework of the Action Plan been internally co-ordinated, and to what extent has internal coherence been assured?
 - What mechanisms were used to achieve this co-ordination? Please provide examples.
- 2.2 To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Action Plan been co-ordinated with other institutions and donors, including the Horizontal Facility, and have these co-ordination efforts avoided duplication of effort?
 - What co-ordination mechanisms were used? Please provide examples.

3. *Efficiency and Added value*

- 3.1 To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Action Plan?
 - Please provide examples.
 - What support did you provide to the CoE Office in Sarajevo?
 - What other channels were used to enable linkages across AP projects?
- 3.2 What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic related restriction measures on the Action Plan implementation?
 - How were these restrictions dealt with? Please provide examples
 - What proportion of activities across AP were affected?
 - Have any staff/participants been affected by ill-health?

3.3 Question specific to respondents dealing with overall costs and performance of the AP] To what extent are the costs proportionate to outputs and outcomes throughout the AP? What factors have influenced any particular discrepancies?

- Please provide an overall view of project costs (expenditure) (backed by data) to date.
- What have been the main outputs and outcomes of the project to date?

4. **Impact and Sustainability**

4.1 To what extent has the Council of Europe contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- Which Reforms?
- Please provide examples of the contribution

4.2 Did the Action Plan have different outcomes for men and women?

- Please provide examples.
- What factors have influenced this?

4.3 Have the outcomes built on the results that were already achieved under the first Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017?

- Which outcomes are these? Please provide examples.

5. **Visibility**

5.1. To what extent has the Council of Europe visibility been ensured in the Action Plan implementation?

- Please provide examples across the AP.
- What channels were used to ensure the visibility?

5.2. Were citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences sufficiently updated on the outcomes and benefits of the projects implemented as part of AP?

- In what ways was this done?
- What communication tools were used?
- How did you assess the reception of the information?

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 How could future Action Plans better contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy?

6.2 What factors arising from your knowledge of the implementation of the current AP might be useful to consider for the improvement of the next AP?

Project-Level Questionnaire

1. **Relevance and Effectiveness**

1.1 What are the main objectives of the project on which you have been working?

- To what extent has the project achieved its main objectives to date?
- Which factors have supported/ hindered the effectiveness of the project?

1.2 In what way has the project contributed to gender equality (by mainstreaming gender)?

- What factors have supported/hindered this during implementation?
- Were any changes made during implementation to accommodate the mainstreaming? Please provide examples

1.3 To what extent has a human rights-based approach been integrated into the implementation of the project?

- What factors have supported/hindered this during implementation?
- Were any changes made during implementation to accommodate the mainstreaming? Please provide examples.

1.4 To what extent have civil society organisations been integrated into the implementation of the project?

- What factors have supported/hindered this during implementation?
- Were any changes made during implementation to accommodate their integration? Please provide examples.

1.5 To what extent has your project team been able to adapt the working methods and approach to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions?

- What factors have supported/hindered these adaptations? Please provide examples.
- What specific changes were made to the project as a result of the Pandemic?

2. Coherence

2.1 How has the project been co-ordinated with other CoE AP projects?

- What mechanisms were used? Please provide examples.

2.2 How has the project been co-ordinated with projects from other institutions and donors?

- How have co-ordination efforts addressed any potential duplication?
- What mechanisms were used? Please provide examples.

3. Efficiency and Added Value

3.1 To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Action Plan?

- What is the CoE's comparative advantage in your project and to what extent has it influenced project implementation?
- What interlinkages exist between your project and other AP projects?
- What channels are used to enable those linkages?

3.2 To what extent did the fact that the project was part of the Action Plan contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

- In particular, which objectives?
- What practical benefits did your project's inclusion in the AP bring?
- If able to compare, how was the support infrastructure for your project vis-à-vis other non-AP projects?

3.3 What was the impact of the COVID-19 restriction measures on the project implementation?

- How was this dealt with? Please provide examples.
- What proportion of activities relied on in-person meetings?
- Which activities were you able to modify? /Cancel?
- Were your staff members/participants affected by ill-health?

3.4 To what extent are the project costs proportionate to outputs and outcomes?

- What has been the project expenditure to date?
- What have been the project outputs to date?
- What have been the project outcomes to date?
- What factors have influenced any discrepancies between expenditures and outputs/outcomes?

4. Impact and Sustainability

4.1 In what way the project contributed to the sustainable implementation of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- Please provide examples of the contribution

4.2 Did the project have different outcomes for men and women?

- Please provide examples. Were they intended?

4.3 Have the project activities built on the results of previous projects in the first Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017?

- Which ones? Please provide examples.

5. Visibility

- 5.1 To what extent has the visibility of the Council of Europe been facilitated during the project implementation?
- What channels were used to ensure visibility?
 - How did being a part of the Action Plan assist in the visibility of project outcomes?
- 5.2. Were citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences sufficiently updated on the outcomes and benefits of the project?
- In what ways was this done?
 - What communication tools were used?
 - How did you assess the reception of the information?

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 How has the Action Plan contributed to better achievement of the project objectives?
- 6.2 What findings from the project implementation would be useful to be considered for the next AP?

Rated Questions

High-Level Rated Questions

7.1 Rate the importance of the AP in view of the democratic reforms in BiH.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not Important Somewhat Important NA Important Extremely Important

7.1 Rate the importance of the AP in view of the democratic reforms in BiH.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not Important Somewhat Important NA Important Extremely Important

Project-Level Rated Questions

7.1 Rate the relevance of the Action Plan to your project.

Not Relevant
 Somewhat Relevant
 NA
 Relevant
 Extremely Relevant

7.2 Rate the importance of your project in view of the democratic reforms in BiH.

Not Important
 Somewhat Important
 NA
 Important
 Extremely Important

7.3 Rate the specific potential of the Council of Europe's effectiveness in this regard.

Not Effective
 Somewhat Effective
 NA
 Effective
 Extremely Effective

Annexe 3. List of Interviewees

Semi-structured interviews

HF II 20 - Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina (5)

- Stanislava Tanić, Coordinator for Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, Ministry of Security of BiH
- Ajli Bahtijaragić, Project Development and Management Expert, International Forum of Solidarity (IFS) EMMAUS
- Arben Murtezić, Director, Public Institution Center for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Lejla Hrustanović Isović, Task manager for Horizontal Facility 20, EU Delegation to BiH
- Elma Zahirović, Project office, Council of Europe (Sarajevo Office)

Regional project: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level ROMACTED (Regional) (4)

- Saliha Đuderija, Assistant to the Minister of Human Rights and Refugees, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees
- Mujo Fafulić, President, Romalen (Roma NGO)
- Ljubisa Stanišić, Official of the Office for Minorities, City of Bijeljina
- Maja Grujić, Project officer, Council of Europe (Sarajevo Office)

Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners (6)

- Redžo Kahrić, Prison Governor, Zenica Prison
- Nermina Delibašić, Head of Training, Zenica Prison
- Aleksander Majdov, Assistant Prison Governor, Bijeljina Prison
- Marinko Šakić, Project Management Specialist, USAID Office in BiH
- Predrag Šofranac, Programme Manager, Council of Europe (Sarajevo Office)
- Tanja Rakušić-Hadžić, Head of Unit Criminal Law Cooperation, Council of Europe

HF II 33 - Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in BiH - JUFREX (6)

- Amela Odošević, Director of Broadcasting, Communications Regulatory Agency of BiH
- Maida Čulahović, Head of the Complaints and Analysis Department, Communications Regulatory Agency of BiH
- Davor Trilin, Coordinator of HF 33 on behalf of Judicial Academy of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Judicial Academy of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Vladimir Pandurević, Task Manager for HF 33, EU Delegation to BiH
- Vanja Ibrahimbegović-Tihak, Project Officer, Council of Europe (Sarajevo Office)
- Martina Silvestri, Project Manager, DG Human Rights and Legal Affairs - Cooperation and Information Society, Council of Europe (previously Programme Manager of JUFREX)

Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina (6)

- Admir Suljagić, Director, Secretariat of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council
- Hajro Pošković, Deputy Director, Secretariat of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council
- Emira Hodžić, Registrar of Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Arben Murtezić, Director, Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centre of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Sergey Dikman, Programme Co-ordinator, Human Rights National Implementation Division, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)
- Sanel Karađuz, Project Manager, Council of Europe (Sarajevo Office)

HF II 21 - Quality Education for all (QUALITY ED - Bosnia and Herzegovina) (3)

- Adnan Husić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Dijana Pejić, Director, School Center Fra Martin Nedić in Orašje
- Zorica Lešić, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe (Sarajevo Office)

Electoral support for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections (4)

- Irena Hadžiabdić, Member, Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Fikret Zuko, Director, Association of the Blind of Canton Sarajevo
- Siri Andersen, Counsellor/ Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy Sarajevo
- Guillaume Loiseau, Project Officer, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)

Multi-project, co-ordination and cross-cutting issues (4)

- Loreta Vioiu, Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo Office
- Delphine Freymann, Head of Division, Programming Department, Council of Europe
- Katerina Markovova, South-East Europe and Turkey Co-ordinator, Programming Department, Council of Europe
- Edita Kabasaj, Communications specialist, EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina

At kick-off meetings only

HF II 20 - Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Lilia Kolombet, Head of Cooperation and Capacity-Building Unit (GRETA), Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)
- Severina Spassova, Senior Project Officer, Cooperation and Capacity-Building Unit (GRETA), Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)

Regional project: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level ROMACTED (Regional)

- Aurora Ailincăi, Deputy Head of Roma and Travellers Division, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)
- Marina Vasic, Project Officer, Roma and Travellers Division, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)

Structured sentence management for violent and extremist prisoners

- Donche Boshkovski, Project Manager, Criminal Law Cooperation Unit, Council of Europe
- Raluca Ivan, Project Manager, Criminal Law Cooperation Unit, Council of Europe

HF II 33 - Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in BiH - JUFREX

- Ardita Abdiu, Head of Co-operation on Freedom of Expression Division, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)
- Elena Brodeala, Project Officer, Co-operation on Freedom of Expression Division, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)

Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Biljana Sladojevic-Milatovic, Project Manager, Human Rights National Implementation Division, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)

HF II 21 - Quality Education for all (QUALITY ED - Bosnia and Herzegovina)

- Sarah Keating, Head of Cooperation and Capacity Building Division, Education Department, Council of Europe
- Vesna Atanasova, Project Manager, Education Department, Council of Europe

Electoral support for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections

- François Friedrich, Head of Elections and Civil Society, Council of Europe (HQ Strasbourg)

Non-sampled projects, co-ordination and cross-cutting issues

- Konstantin Troussevitch, Head of External Presence and Programme Support Department, Council of Europe
- Aydemir Demiroz, Senior Project Officer, External Presence and Programme Support Department, Council of Europe
- Fredrik Holm, Head of Central Co-ordination and Risk Management Division, Council of Europe
- Pauline Cadeac, Communication Officer, Central Co-ordination and Risk Management Division, Council of Europe
- Alberto Maynar-Aguilar, Country Advisor, Resource Mobilisation and Donor Relations Division, Council of Europe
- Aygen Becquart, Head of Evaluations Division, Directorate of Internal Oversight, Council of Europe
- Maria Goldman, Administrator, Directorate of Internal Oversight, Council of Europe
- Biljana Prlja, Political Advisor, Directorate of Political Affairs, Council of Europe
- Anna Capello-Brillat, Head of Confidence-building Measures Division, Directorate of Political Affairs, Council of Europe
- Albina Ovcearenco, Political Advisor, Directorate of Political Affairs, Council of Europe
- Arezo Banafsheh, Gender Advisor, Council of Europe
- Jennifer Jokstad, Human Rights Advisor, Council of Europe
- Ana Medarska Lazova, Deputy Head of HELP Unit, Council of Europe
- Valentina Boz, Senior Project Officer, HELP Unit, Council of Europe
- Bojana Nikolin, Administrator in the Department for the Execution of Judgements of ECtHR, Council of Europe
- Mustafa Ferati, Head of Economic Crime Division, Council of Europe
- Evgeni Evgeniev, Head of Unit - East and South-East Europe, Economic Crime Division, Council of Europe
- Domitille Gautier De Charnace, Junior Project Officer, CEPEJ, Council of Europe
- Jenna Shearer-Demir, Capacity Building and Cooperation Projects, Council of Europe
- Marité Moras, Head of Unit, Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, Council of Europe

- Natalija Milovic, Project Manager, Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, Council of Europe
- Stefano Valenti, Head of No Hate Speech and Co-operation Unit, Council of Europe
- Angela Longo, Project Manager, No Hate Speech and Co-operation Unit, Council of Europe
- Alexandru Cristea, Cybercrime Division, Council of Europe

Annexe 4. List of Documents Reviewed

Council of Europe

- Project reports of individual sampled projects:
 - Electoral Support for BiH for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections
 - HF 33 - Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in BiH
 - HF 20 – Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in BiH
 - ROMACTED
 - Structured Sentence management
 - HF 21 – Quality Education for All (BiH)
 - Initiative for Legal Certainty and Efficient Judiciary in BiH
- Action Plan-level Annual Report for donors for 01/01/2018 to 31/12/2018
- Action Plan-level Annual Report for donors for 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019
- Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021: Progress Review Report (June 2018 - March.2020)
- Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2016-2019: Supporting reforms and setting the stage for substantive change: overview of the European Union-Council of Europe joint programme's achievements
- Appendix IV – Visibility Annex – CoE AP BiH 2020 Donor report
- Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023
- Council of Europe Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Co-operation projects

BiH Institutions

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- Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption (2014), Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2015-2019 and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2015-2019
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- Bosnia i Herzegovina Institucija ombudsmana za ljudska prava Bosne i Hercegovine (2016), Operational Strategy of the Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period of 2016-2021
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- Banjaluka Center for Human Rights and & OSCE (2020), Human Rights in times of COVID-19. Identified omission in realization of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- OSCE (2020), COVID-19 Crisis Response: Human Rights and Gender Analysis