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Impact assessment of the initiative “Women’s Empowerment and Local Development - WELOD3”

Palestine



AID 10119

This independent evaluation was commissioned by Office III of the Directorate General for Development Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation to the company STEM-VCR through a public tender procedure under Article 36 of the Public Contracts Code.

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The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the evaluators and do not necessarily coincide with those of the client.

The picture on the cover represents the back wall of the meeting room of the 'Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families' in Bethlehem, a shelter that supports women victims of violence. It was created by several women housed in the Centre (photo by A. Rocchi).

The picture on the back cover represents a painting by one of the women hosted in the 'Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families' in Bethlehem, a shelter that supports women victims of violence (photo by A. Rocchi).

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Committee
AGO	Attorney General's Office
AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
Al Harah	Local Association
AMAL	Human rights and gender equality
BWF	Business Women Forum
C&V	Communication and Visibility
CAN	Analysis Municipality
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CCA	Common Analysis of Countries
CCE	Centre for Continuing Education, Birzeit University
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Defense for Children International
DGCS	Directorate General for Development Cooperation
EJS	European Joint Strategy
EJS	Palestinian Association
EU	European Union
FG	Focus Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPB	Family Protection Bill
GAD	Governor's Affair Department
GAPEU	Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GPC	General Personnel Council
GPI	Gender Policy Institute
GSWG	Gender Sector Working Group

ICHRC	Independent Human Rights Commission
IGA	Economic Empowerment
IPF	Institute for Palestinian Finance
IRADA	Women Informing Responses for their Agency, Development and Advocacy
ISS	Semi-structured Interview
ISTAT	National Institute of Statistics
IWS	Institute of Women Studies
KII	Key Informant Interview
LACS	Local Aid Coordination Secretariat
LF	Logframe
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAECI	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MDG-F	United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
MEL	Monitoring, Assessment and Learning
MIFTAH	ONG national women's empowerment and gender issues
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRS	National Reference System
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OO	General Objective
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
OVI	Objectively Verified Indicators
PA	Palestinian Authority
PACCC	Palestinian Anti-corruption Coalition
PCBS	Palestinian Bureau of Statistics
PDE	European Development Partners
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council

PO	Programmes Operational
PWWSD	National ONG dealing with women's empowerment and gender issues
RBM	Results-Based Management
REFORM	ONG national women's empowerment and gender issues
ROF	Results-oriented
Rs	Results
RWWS	ONG national women's empowerment and gender issues
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFPO	Success, Failure, Problems, Potentialities, Obstacles
SHAMS	Palestinian Association
Shashat	National NGO working on women's empowerment and gender issues
SO	Specific Objectives
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNWomen	ONU for women
UTL	Local Technical Unit
VAW	Violence Against Women
WATC	Women Affairs Technical Committee
WCLAC	Al-Haq, Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling
WELOD	Women's Empowerment and Local Development

LOCATION OF THE INTERVENTION



SUMMARY

The programme "Women's Empowerment and Local Development - WELOD3" (AID 10119), implemented between July 2014 and March 2022, focused on a set of actions implemented - on the one hand - by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (now MoSD - Ministry of Social Development) of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which had budget support ex art.15 (for a total of 1,700,000 euro) and - on the other hand - by the local AICS office in Jerusalem, through an on-site fund (for a total of 1,090,000 euro) and an expert fund (for 510,000 euro). The total cost of the programme is €3,300,000. The initiative follows a series of previous projects in similar areas: WELOD 1 and WELOD 2. The programme was supposed to last 3 years, but due to a delay by MoWA in contributing 80% of the budget, the amount of 320,000 euro had to be transferred and spent by MoSD. In addition to the institutional bureaucracy (both on the Palestinian and the Italian side) that created further delays, the pandemic had an impact on the entire process.

The rationale of the initiative is based on a **theoretical algorithm** built on the observation of the main identified weakness of Palestinian public administrations and services in relation to protection of women's rights, as well as factors that prevent women's full social participation. Furthermore, this circumstance keeps women in at risk of gender-based violence. Some factors can produce significant improvements, namely:

- Gender mainstreaming in government policies;
- Strengthening fight against gender-based violence;
- Strengthening public administrations and women's service centres;
- Creating and supporting women's empowerment processes, with regard to starting up economic initiatives.

These aspects can be enforced through:

- training of public administrations concerned with services and policies in support of women, on gender planning, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of national plans;
- training and capacity-building against gender-based violence in women's support centres;
- training and capacity building in women's business support centres;
- involvement of non-governmental actors, in particular civil society organisations (CSOs), in the management of actions carried out by women's support centres;
- provision of technical assistance and financial support to institutions involved in equal opportunities and women's support actions (MoWA, MOSD).

WELOD3 evaluated programme aimed as overall objective at increasing economic development opportunities for Palestinian women and contributing to the implementation of international instruments for the defence of their rights. In terms of **specific objectives**, the programme included:

- a. to strengthen the gender mainstreaming and anti-violence capacities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Governorates and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), now the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD);
- b. to empower women economically, politically, socially and culturally and, at the same time, combat gender-based violence by facilitating the reintegration into society of women who have suffered violence;
- c. to coordinate the cross-sectoral area 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' as European *Lead Donor*.

A number of **expected results** have been identified in relation to these objectives:

- Results for Specific Objective 1: To strengthen the gender mainstreaming and anti-violence capacities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Governorates and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD).
- Results for specific objective 2: To empower women economically, politically, socially and culturally and, at the same time, combat gender-based violence by facilitating the reintegration into society of women, who have suffered violence.
- Results for Specific Objective 3: To coordinate the cross-sectoral area "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" as European lead donor.

The initiative included institutional and capacity-building actions for the ministries involved and the aid coordination structure, as well as support actions for the anti-violence services run by MoSD and the establishment of the first National Observatory on Women in Distress, Gender-based Violence and Stalking at MoWA.

In terms of beneficiaries, the initiative was aimed at:

- about 400 women who would benefit from the services provided by the 11 Tawasol and anti-violence services, including socio-economic empowerment activities and combating violence against women;
- about 20 children who should have benefited from anti-violence services;
- at least 200 Palestinian women's organisations and other civil society organisations working on behalf of women;
- at least 30 local Tawasol member institutions;
- local counterparts, i.e. MoWA staff, in particular the heads of the departments working with the Tawasol centres (Policy and Planning; Training; Appeals);
- the Governorates, in particular: the 11 Tawasol Centres/Directors of the Women's and Children's Departments; 11 representatives of the future Tawasol Centres Re-integration Committees; 11 directors and/or technical staff of the legal departments of the Governorates;
- MoSD, in particular: the 11 heads of the Women and Children's department of the local MoSD directorates; the social workers of the local MoSD directorates;
- specialised operators who had to benefit from training, either at university level or in public facilities.

From the point of view of the analysed performance of WELOD3 programme, it is crucial to take into account the difficult and complex situation in Palestine, the daily obstacles to achieve small progresses and the great efforts to maintain a daily life. In addition, the particular context regarding the situation of gender-related issues in which the programme was implemented.

According to the analysis carried out through the evaluation criteria, the initiative appears to have:

- **Relevance**, as it responds to the needs of Palestinian women and girls, who suffer daily acts of discrimination and frequent physical and psychological violence as a result of the traditional patriarchal system in place and of the Israeli occupation. At the same time, the Programme contributes to enhancing the institutional capacity building of the Ministries of Social Development (MoSD) and Women's Affairs (MoWA) in the areas of protection, counselling and services for reintegration of women and girls, victims and survivors of violence. However, the relevance appears to be mitigated by the initiative's design shortcomings, which did not sufficiently take into account the actual institutional capacities of the main actors on the one hand, and an up-to-date understanding of the environment, its potentials and weaknesses on the other. WELOD3 appears more as a mere continuation of WELOD1 and 2, than as an intervention to achieve relevant objectives.

- A high degree of **internal and external coherence** at level of all the partners involved. From the point of view of internal coherence, the programme fully respects the guidelines of the Italian Cooperation and the international standards and criteria adopted in the field of women's rights and gender issues, as well as a good compatibility with the policies that MoWA and MoSD, the main partners in the programme, intend to implement. External coherence is also high as the intervention is complementary with the main initiatives of other international donors active in the same sectors of intervention.
- **The effectiveness** was not very solid considering the uneven capacities of institutions at the central and local levels, the lack of coordination and adequate articulation between the two main institutions involved, which limited the overall implementation of various aspects of the programme. In fact, the action of each stakeholder seemed as implemented separately. Consequently, the results obtained were not consolidated and did not produce an overall positive outcome. However, some positive aspects should be noted, such as: (i) the progress in the improvement of protection services, offered by shelters, in particular the study opportunities offered through scholarships awarded to victims and young survivors of violence, which currently represent the most effective activities implemented; and (ii) the initiatives to prevent and combat violence through the involvement of NGOs, in particular in the implementation of a comprehensive awareness-raising action, which involved boys and girls and reached the community at different levels, enabling the dissemination of key messages for the production of transformation and change in the social fabric.
- **Efficiency** was partly compromised by the lack of a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure efficient *follow-up* of expenditure and implementation of activities. Furthermore, the lack of an adequate systematisation of the documents and information produced during the programme's life cycle did not allow for the necessary corrections to be made to the implementation mechanism, thus widening the gap that already existed between different modes of intervention and thus between the results produced by the two programme components. Furthermore, the delays experienced in the implementation of the activities under MoWA's responsibility slowed down the overall progress of the realisation of results and thus the achievement of objectives. The low operational capacity observed within MoWA and the lack of technical tools created discrepancies that led to progress being recorded on two unrelated levels, that of ministerial budget support and that of local funds managed by the AICS. However, on a more general level, it should be noted that the programme has endeavoured to allocate financial and human resources strategically. The reallocation of funds between ministries was implemented to resolve budgetary discrepancies, ensuring efficient use of resources. The establishment of the Steering Committee and adherence to approval processes indicate a systematic and strategic approach to resource management. However, delays in the submission of documentation by ministries and compliance with reporting requirements indicate areas for improvement, especially in the area of monitoring.
- A poor overall **sustainability** of the initiative. In fact, if on the one hand there is an absolute lack of internal coordination mechanisms that should have been activated, on the other hand there is a good level of sustainability of the activities promoted within WELOD3, such as the shelters that continue to support women victims of violence, in particular, the '*Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families*' in Bethlehem. Unfortunately, initiatives such as the 'GBV National Observatory', (not yet fully functional due to a lack of institutional sustainability), or the absence of any '*exit strategy*' to accompany the consolidation of the actions implemented, contribute to the lack of sustainability.
- Very little **impact** as WELOD3 has not yet worked as expected in promoting the achievement of equality within society. In fact, in order to effectively prevent gender-based violence, the improvement of actions to achieve gender balance by ensuring more equal access to basic services, resources and opportunities should have been intensified. WELOD3 did not take these needs into consideration nor did it accompany MoWA in addressing the mentioned

shortcomings, consequently it did not contribute to creating a strong institutional mechanism for a comprehensive approach that prioritises the rights and welfare of all women affected by GBV. The strengthening of Tawasols, to which the programme has devoted much of its attention, has also clashed with the internal balance of power and influence exerted by other stakeholders in the governorates and central institutions, generating the unexpected result that the effectiveness of Tawasols depends on the capacity and commitment of the individuals assigned to that function. More generally, the creation of Tawasols has failed to create opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration, which is crucial for women and girls who have been marginalised or even excluded from their communities and society because they have denounced the violence they have suffered and thus 'shamed' their families.

Furthermore, WELOD3 was not able to reach very marginalised women, victims or survivors of violence, most of whom reside in rural areas and/or area C, where local authorities cannot easily access them. In fact, it can be noted that the skills development actions only produced important benefits for women who already had some work experience, but very weak effects on most of the trained women who lack resources and additional professional and technical skills to start a small business.

WELOD3 produced positive effects in promoting social transformation by involving NGOs such as REFORM and Shashat, which work specifically on building the capacities of girls and boys to behavioural change. Most of the adolescents involved in the social media workshops and trainings for social change promotion has learnt to recognise violence and inequality, gaining a better understanding of the behaviour that leads to mistreatment, abuse and humiliation of people's dignity.

Finally, despite the efforts made, very little has been achieved in terms of institutional strengthening.

- On the side of **communication and visibility**, WELOD3 achieved a satisfactory performance, especially for the very important awareness-raising component, although the development of an ad hoc communication strategy was lacking. As for visibility, it was adequately promoted at all levels of activity.

On the **good practice** side, it is worth mentioning:

- The implementation of the scholarship **programme** has proven to be an effective practice to support women victims of GBV, enabling them to become self-sufficient and reintegrate into society. The scholarship programme has specifically supported these women in enrolling in university and continuing their studies, resulting in them gaining self-confidence and developing a vision for a better future after obtaining their academic degrees.
- **MoSD** has demonstrated it has the right capacity to use its core functions. Reporting system is well established and, despite the great difficulties faced by all PA institutions (e.g. all PA employees receive only 30% of their salary), the staff is very proactive, motivated and professional. Shelter management is not an easy task, especially due to the limited resources available (e.g. psychological support for shelter staff). However, compared to a few years ago, the activities of the shelters are well carried out.

In addition, the team documented a number of **lessons learnt**, bringing together the knowledge acquired during the implementation of the programme, in particular:

- The evaluation exercise related to WELOD3 highlighted the great efforts promoted by AICS **in an** attempt to address the continuously changing situation in Palestine, the Israeli occupation, and contradictions of the PA. Reconstructing the programme and the activities carried out by AICS as one of WELOD3 partners was particularly challenging due to the lack

of a unified reporting system (including formats and timelines for reporting). In addition, due to the duration of the programme and staff turnover, it was very complicated to reconstruct the whole situation, also from a financial point of view. Among the donors, AICS is recognised as particularly strong for its support to Palestinian institutions and in particular to MoWA and MoSD. In addition, during the evaluation, there was clearly a general and consolidated recognition of its strong role in promoting 'courageous' initiatives, such as the Mehwar, which came into being at a time when talking about GBV was still considered 'haram' (forbidden).

- The **issue of Gaza** (activity 2.3) showed that despite the efforts and the excellent operational capacities of the actors involved, the creation of the centre was not possible due to the political differences between the PA, in particular MoWA, a major supporter of the establishment of a Tawasol centre in Gaza, and the de-facto government in Gaza. During the same period in which the study was conducted, there were moments of tension between the de-facto government in Gaza and international organisations, also following the death of some Italian activists in the area. Considering the existing tensions and political disagreements, AICS decided to abandon the idea of building the centre.
- It has been recognised that women's **economic empowerment** is a multifaceted process that goes beyond capacity building and improving women's knowledge and skills. It should be accompanied by comprehensive interventions that support women in starting their own businesses or other forms of entrepreneurship. This approach can create significant economic *empowerment* and help women achieve economic independence.
- Understanding the **power dynamics** that exist within Palestinian society is key to addressing the social and cultural norms that hinder gender equality. Building alliances with various community groups, including community leaders, religious leaders, political parties, parents and others, is essential to prevent any negative or violent backlash against programmes aimed at addressing gender violence. Furthermore, it is important to carefully consider the tools used, such as film and art, especially in relatively traditional communities. These communities may need time and effort to recognise and embrace these mediums as effective tools for social change.
- The essential role played by MoWA in **raising awareness** and especially in establishing a ministry to represent gender issues at the national policy level and at the international level is recognised. However, its role and especially its functions need to be redefined, focusing more on the monitoring and evaluation function rather than on the direct implementation of activities.
- The importance of the **civil society involvement** is noted, especially with regard to the selection of beneficiaries, the implementation of *capacity-building* actions and ensuring that the training is carried out properly. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that in order to make the training action more effective, the intervention should have entrusted NGOs with the role of *coaching* in the creation of productive activities by the target women and the *follow-up* for a short period at the beginning of the start-up of these activities, as well as *counselling* activities to produce positive effects especially on the living conditions of victims and survivors.
- The opportunity to return to university and continue their studies, offered by the **scholarships for young women victims of GBV**, played a transformative role, strengthening their self-esteem and empowerment. However, despite enrolling in university and holding an academic certificate, the women interviewed reported facing a number of challenges, in terms of social marginalisation and finding employment. The real problem is the poor reputation that shelters have among the population, as they are considered the last resort to turn to in case of (mainly domestic) violence. This creates a number of obstacles in terms of the creation of new facilities and government support for existing ones.

On the side of **general recommendations**, the following should be noted:

- In order to enhance learning and transformative actions, the **creation of spaces for reflective learning** with all stakeholders through platforms or ad hoc workshops is recommended. These spaces should be designed to facilitate in-depth reflection, encourage the sharing of successful practices, innovative approaches and identify opportunities for collaboration and synergies.
- There is clear room for improvement in the implementation mechanism of future interventions if ad hoc technical assistance is provided to institutions in the fields of coordination, organisation (including a clear **programme governance scheme** identifying all actors involved) and day-to-day monitoring of planned activities.

As far as **specific recommendations are concerned**, the result of the evaluation draws attention to the following.

- Based on the findings of the assessment, it is clear that strengthening existing governmental **and non-governmental monitoring and accountability mechanisms** in Palestine will help the entire environment to better respond to real needs and, most importantly, give the donor community the opportunity to invest where funds can have a real impact. In practice, there is an increasing need to move from policy creation to policy implementation, prevention and enforcement of existing laws.
- **Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to support partners and counterparts in measuring results and collecting feedback.** Based on the results of this final evaluation, a key recommendation for the WELOD programme is to implement a robust M&E system. This system should be designed to help partners and counterparts effectively measure results and gather valuable feedback. By establishing a structured M&E framework, the programme can gradually instil a culture of evidence-based decision-making and learning. Furthermore, the collection of gender-sensitive indicators should be a key component of the M&E system to ensure inclusiveness and address the differential impact of activities on men, women, boys and girls in Palestinian society.
- **A C&V plan and an awareness-raising and advocacy strategy** should accompany further action, to spread knowledge and create a common understanding of the action and the results to be achieved.
- Report and inform on key outcomes or results through **consolidated and standardised reporting**. Each of the implementing partners and key stakeholders must contribute to the reports by providing a solid analysis of results or progress on objectives to be achieved and not just a description of activities.
- Conduct an **in-depth assessment of the capacity-building needs of key implementing ministries in the design phase in order to** better address existing structural/systematic weaknesses within PA institutions to ensure sustainability and impact.
- The evaluation exercise revealed a widespread and well-recognised '**training fatigue**' among PA officials, NGO and institutional staff. People are used to attending training courses on everything, without any impact evaluation of their effective outcome. As such, they move from one course to another, driven more by the need to be away from their office than by the need to actually learn and progress in their curriculum. The training must include **follow-up** phases in which the participant can be evaluated not only at the end of the training itself, but also after a specific period (to be indicated in the project proposal). Only in this way, the training will guarantee a correct outcome.
- While institutions tend to find it difficult to make rapid progress in supporting women in need with innovative and more responsive responses, **CSOs** have demonstrated not only a solid capacity to penetrate the internal channels of society, but also to respond correctly to the main needs of women, especially in remote areas. It would be of great impact to create a link between institutions and CSOs in terms of **training to be provided to staff of institutions**

and local authorities, especially those working in sensitive areas such as gender and gender-based violence.

- Design should be more results-based (TOC). The tool of **results-based management (RBM)** could be adopted. In addition, the inclusion of an M&E system should be designed to go beyond monitoring activities to monitoring and evaluating results. Monitoring reports should elaborate on the problems and challenges faced by implementers, including the main discussion points and suggested solutions.
- In light of the political, economic and governance challenges, the evaluation recommends a priority focus on the **private sector as an engine for employment and growth**, on microfinance, and on an area-based approach to build capacity at the subnational and municipal level to identify needs, set priorities, plan, implement projects and manage resources in a transparent and participatory manner, enabling women to be true proactive actors.
- Given the fiscal and financial uncertainties and shrinking donor budgets, the evaluation team emphasised the need for development programmes to be financially sustainable. As part of this recommendation, it is important to emphasise that when addressing issues of gender equality, women's rights and the economic empowerment of women and girls, it is particularly important to also consider those who suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities, survivors of violence, women heads of households and those living in rural areas. A **needs assessment** is needed to better define the business sectors in which women can invest and engage.

1. Award procedure and implementation

Following the direct awarding procedure referred to in art. 36, paragraph 2, lett. a) of Legislative Decree no. 50/2016 as amended and supplemented, with a determination of 24 November 2022 the Directorate General for Development Cooperation - Office III Evaluation Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation entrusted the company STEM-VCR srl with the impact assessment of the initiative "Women's Empowerment and Local Development" - WELOD phase 3.

The evaluation work officially started on 5 April 2023 and had to be completed by 8 August 2023, i.e. within 125 days.

On 13 April, the initial report was presented and the methodology was revised by updating the technical bid submitted by STEM-VCR on 8 November 2022. The revision was carried out on the basis of the analysis of the initial documentation collected and an initial series of "exploratory" interviews with the staff of the DGCS and the Italian Development Cooperation Agency in the Jerusalem office, and with some of the actors most involved in the implementation of the intervention. The revision of the methodology took into account the evolution of the Palestinian context from the security point of view, with particular attention to the potential limitation of access to some of the locations initially proposed in the technical tender.

The initial report was approved on 28 April 2023 and the field mission started on 1 May 2023 and ended on 7 June 2023.

2. Context of the evaluated initiative

2.1 Country Situation

2.1.1 Brief description of the development policies active in the country and its political, socio-economic, cultural and institutional situation

In 2022, the Palestinian population was 5.4 million, of which 49% were female and 2 per cent disabled¹. With 3.2 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and 2.2 million in Gaza², demographic characteristics and vulnerabilities differ significantly between the two regions. The population is expected to reach 6.9 million by 2030, due to a population growth rate that remains high. This is despite a reduction in the total fertility rate from 5.0 in 1999 to 4.0 in 2021. Rural areas continue to have higher fertility rates (4.4), compared to urban areas and refugee camps (3.5). Palestine is a young society, with 66% of the population under the age of 30. However, opportunities are limited, with 44% of 15-29 year olds unemployed and a disproportionate impact on female youth³.

Gender equality is a significant challenge for Palestinian women in various aspects of life, including health, legal, social and political spheres. Existing laws and regulations in Palestine are not gender-sensitive and fail to adequately promote women's rights and protect them. The absence of laws specifically addressing gender-based violence leaves women vulnerable to various forms of violence, which are widespread in Palestinian society. Moreover, even when laws do address gender-specific aspects, the lack of regulations and enforcement procedures hinders the intended impact on the effective protection of women.

¹ PCBS, Press Release on the Occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2021.

² PCBS, Indicators (available at: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/881/default.aspx>).

³ PCBS, Palestinian Labour Force Survey: 2021 Annual Report, April 2022, p.110.

The participation of women in decision-making positions is still rather limited. Official figures for 2022⁴ show that women account for about 25% of the members of the Palestinian Central Council, the second highest decision-making body. As for the 2021 local elections, only 22% of women were elected (compared to 78% of elected men).

According to the data of the 'General Staff Council' (updated to February 2022), the percentage of women in the public sector has reached 47% of all employees. On the other hand, the percentage of women in management positions is very low compared to men. Furthermore, in the board of directors of the chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, the percentage of men has reached 99%, compared to only 1% of women; only about 19% of judges are women, and the percentage of female prosecutors is only 20%.

Major gaps in decision-making significantly hinder the advancement of reforms that promote equal access to social services and the promotion of better mechanisms for the defence of women's rights.

Significant progress has been made in women's and girls' access to education, thanks in part to the raising of girls' age at marriage. In fact, the percentage of women between the ages of 20 and 24 who married before they turned 15 in Palestine was 0.7 per cent in 2019/2020, up from 2.1 per cent in 2014. The percentage of women in the same age group who married before they turned 18 in Palestine was 13.4% in 2019/2020, compared to 24.2% in 2014⁵. Unfortunately, violence against women continues to be widespread, as shown by the results of the National Violence Survey conducted by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2019. The survey revealed that 29 per cent (38 per cent in Gaza and 24 per cent in the West Bank) of married or previously married women have experienced various forms of violence, such as sexual, physical, psychological, social or economic violence, inflicted by their husbands. The data show that more than half of the women who experienced violence preferred to remain silent and 48 per cent talked about it with their families, while only 1.4 per cent sought support from service providers⁶.

The implementation of the National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence became mandatory for all relevant institutions following its adoption by Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 of 2013, which was officially published in the Palestinian Official Gazette on 5 January 2014. As a result, the National Referral System was enacted and became legally binding⁷. The National Referral System is a mechanism that aims at the protection and rehabilitation of women victims of violence, provides important interventions by various service providers in the health, social and legal sectors, ensuring their cooperation on the basis of complementarity and role sharing. In 2022, the National Referral System underwent a comprehensive review led by the *Ministry of Woman Affairs* (MoWA), during which consultation sessions involving *stakeholders* from official institutions and civil society were conducted. Following the review process, the Cabinet adopted the updated National Referral System, which officially came into force in 2023⁸.

Despite the development of several drafts of the Family Protection Law over the past 17 years, its adoption has been delayed, even after the CEDAW Committee urged the Palestinian government in its concluding observations in 2018. Internationally recognized legal framework adoption is crucial because it provides protective measures for women within the domestic sphere. Furthermore, the legal system in Palestine has significant discrimination against women, with the 1960 Jordanian Penal Code still in force in the West Bank, under which women do not enjoy the same rights as men, for example in terms of inheritance of property. Although some amendments have been made to the Penal

⁴ Official government structure as reported for 2022.

⁵ Common European Strategy in Support of Palestine 2021-2024, December 2022

⁶ https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/violence_survey_preliminary_results_2019.pdf

⁷ <http://www.awrad.org/files/server/NRS%20report%20english%202016.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.mowa.pna.ps/work-area/31.html>

Code through presidential decrees, comprehensive legal reforms are needed to ensure compliance with international conventions and treaties.

Finally, after the last Israeli elections, Israeli politicians formed the most right-wing and anti-Arab government in the country's history⁹. Far-right and ultra-nationalist figures, such as the extremist settler Itamar Ben-Gvir, took up ministerial posts after campaigning for the annexation of the West Bank through a strategy of occupation of the territories by settlers¹⁰ and the strengthening of military control over the Palestinians.

As reported in UNWomen's publication *"Ending Violence against women in Palestine"* "Women and girls in Palestine continue to experience various forms of violence due to entrenched discriminatory social norms and traditions and the prolonged Israeli occupation. The most common types of violence against women observed in Palestine include domestic violence, sexual harassment, early marriage and femicide, as well as in public and private spheres, including streets, workplaces, homes and high-density areas such as refugee camps, particularly in Gaza. Outdated and discriminatory laws in Palestine prevent survivors of violence from accessing gender-responsive services and obtaining justice. Moreover, survivors of violence often face social stigma and are blamed for the violence they have suffered"¹¹.

2.1.2 Women's empowerment

Palestine is subject to intense political and socio-economic challenges, high volatility and instability. Government efforts are still insufficient to pursue strategies to improve women's and youth employment.

As for the Palestinian economy, it reached a growth rate of 3.6 per cent in 2022, down from 7.0 per cent in 2021. Despite several complex crises and the reduction of external support for Palestine, as well as continued Israeli deductions of tax revenues, the economy has managed to sustain a certain level of growth¹². Unemployment is also a pressing problem in Palestinian society, with women experiencing higher unemployment rates than men. The unemployment rate among young graduates aged 19-29 with intermediate or higher degrees reached 48.3 per cent, with a disproportionate percentage of women, 61.3 per cent, compared to 34.3 per cent of men. The unemployment rate for young graduates in the West Bank was 28.6 per cent, while it rose to 73.9 per cent in the Gaza Strip. Female labour force participation remained low, with only 18.6% of females compared to 70.7% of males.¹³.

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/07/israel-far-right-ultranationalist-hits-ground-running-and-ripple-effects-are-being-felt>

¹⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129722>; Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is illegal: UN rights commission 'For their report, the Commissioners reviewed the policies and actions Israel has used to maintain the occupation and annex parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They focused on how Israel has sustained and advanced its "settlement enterprise", including statements made by Israeli officials indicating the intent to maintain permanent control over the land in violation of international law. The Commission concluded that by continuing to occupy the territory by force, Israel incurs international responsibilities and remains accountable for violations of the rights of the Palestinians, both individually and as a people".'

¹¹ UNWomen, 'Ending violence against women in Palestine'.

¹² <https://www.pma.ps/en/Media/Press-Releases/the-performance-of-the-palestinian-economy-in-2022-and-economic-forecasts-for-2023>

¹³ <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4421#:~:text=Present%20the%20Main%20Finding%20of%20Labour%20Force%20Survey%20in%202022&text=On%20gender%20level%2C%20unemployment%20rate,20%25%20for%20males%20in%20Palestine.&text=The%20number%20of%20unemployed%20was,thousand%20in%20the%20West%20Bank>

Poverty rates have risen significantly over the past decade, reaching 29.2% in 2020. Vulnerabilities have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and related mobility restrictions, which have overburdened an already strained health system and aggravated socioeconomic conditions¹⁴.

The complex situation in the country has led to a rapid decline in the national economy, resulting in a rising unemployment rate for women (from 41% in 2019 to 43% in 2021). These economic difficulties have been particularly devastating for families and vulnerable groups, including households headed by women (in 2021, 12% of women in the West Bank headed households and 11% in the Gaza Strip). Although these difficulties affect all aspects of life and the economy, they have a disproportionate impact on the employment gap between men and women, with the unemployment rate for women at 43%, almost double that of men at 21%. The unemployment rate among young (19-29 year old) graduates has reached 53% (66% of females compared to 39% of males)¹⁵.

A significant proportion of the female workforce is engaged in low-skilled, unsustainable and low-income activities. This situation is further aggravated by the lack of non-traditional vocational and technical training and inadequate alternative sources of funding, which often dissuade Palestinian women from starting their own businesses¹⁶. Although Palestinian women's enrolment in lower and higher education is higher than that of men (the percentage of female students enrolled in Palestinian institutions of higher education reached 61 per cent of total students enrolled in 2020), women are less likely than men to acquire job-relevant skills outside of formal education, which limits their ability to adapt their skills to the private sector. This results in low participation of women in the labour market¹⁷.

At the same time, 29% of employees in the private sector receive a monthly salary below the average minimum wage (1,450 Israeli shekels), 29% for men, compared to 30% for women. In addition, 25 per cent of female employees in the private sector work without a contract of employment and 56 per cent receive a contribution to finance their pension/ severance pay¹⁸.

In 2019, 59% of women and girls reported experiencing at least one form of gender-based violence by their husband (52% in the West Bank and 70% in Gaza). Of these, 57% had experienced psychological violence, 19% physical violence and 9% sexual violence, while 10% had experienced the emerging problem of cyberviolence. One third of women with disabilities who are married or have been married have experienced violence from their husbands. During the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence increased significantly due to blockages that forced women to spend more time with an abusive partner or close relative and due to the lack of operational support services¹⁹.

2.2 Italian Cooperation in Palestine

At the time of WELOD3's identification and planning, AICS Jerusalem had a portfolio of programmes and projects totalling EUR 180 million, of which EUR 24 million was in direct management and over EUR 20 million in budget support to Palestinian ministries. The strategy focused on contributing to the full achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Palestine, as identified by the Palestinian Authority in the National Policy Agenda: the strengthening of an enabling environment

¹⁴ PCBS, Palestinian Labour Force Survey: 2021 Annual Report, April 2022

¹⁵ PCBS, Palestinian Labour Force Survey: 2021 Annual Report, April 2022

¹⁶ Doa Wadi, 'Women's Empowerment in Palestine: A Process in Progress', available at: <https://www.iemed.org/publication/womens-empowerment-in-palestine-a-process-in-progress/>.

¹⁷ <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4458> 8 March 2023

¹⁸ United Nations Population Fund, Country programme document for State of Palestine

¹⁹ UNCT, Common Country Analysis (CCA), August 2022

for economic initiative to flourish, the improvement of the Palestinian health system and the resilience of the most vulnerable groups.

The Italian Cooperation in Palestine includes a wide range of partners, such as the European Union in Jerusalem, several Italian civil society organisations active in the country, many United Nations agencies for the implementation of multilateral projects, as well as a large number of Palestinian institutional and civil society partners, key actors in achieving concrete results on the ground. Together with the other EU Member States, the Italian Cooperation is fully engaged in the EU Joint Programming as main donor in the Gender sector. Furthermore, the Humanitarian Aid Programme continues to be a pillar of the AICS strategy in Jerusalem, supporting vulnerable communities in Area C, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Human rights and gender equality have been and still are a strategic area for Italian Cooperation in Palestine. With a long history of commitment, it encompasses the economic and social empowerment of women and the promotion of their participation in the public sphere, the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, and the promotion of the defence and realisation of human rights and the promotion of a culture that respects the dignity of persons.

AICS Jerusalem's commitment to promoting a society based on human rights and gender equality was reaffirmed by Italy's leading position as a donor in this area within the EU Joint Programming. The Human Rights and Gender Equality Programme comprises 10 projects, 5 bilateral and 5 multilateral initiatives, totalling EUR 16.5 million. Regarding human rights and gender equality on the bilateral channel (with the Ministry of Women's Affairs - MoWA and Social Development - MoSD), the programme seeks to combat violence against women and promote decent work opportunities for women. In particular, WELOD3 - Women's Empowerment and Local Development (EUR 3.3 million) supported the similar objectives of IRADA - Women Informing Responses for their Agency, Development and Advocacy (EUR 1.5 million). The KARAMA project (EUR 600,000) aimed to promote a human rights culture, improve children's rights and promote the abolition of the death penalty. In addition, two other relevant projects were launched in 2018: SI-GEWE - Support to the Institutionalization of Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment in the NPA 2017-2022 (EUR 4 million), to promote gender mainstreaming in the Palestinian government; improve gender-based violence services; and support gender-sensitive analysis of statistical data for a more equitable society in cooperation with MoWA, MoSD, Attorney General's Office (AGO), the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and civil society organisations; AMAL, Human Rights and Gender Equality (EUR 4 million), for the promotion of human rights and gender equality principles among educational institutions and the monitoring of SGDs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the AGO and the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT).

2.3 Evaluated programme

2.3.1 *The logic of the initiative and its objectives*

The evaluation concerns the programme 'Women's Empowerment and Local Development - WELOD3' (AID 10119). The initiative, conducted from July 2014 to March 2022, involved the funding of a set of actions implemented - on the one hand - by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (now MoSD - Ministry of Social Development) of the Palestinian Authority, which had budget support ex art.15 (for a total of 1,700,000 Euros) and - on the other hand - by the local AICS office in Jerusalem, through an on-site fund (for a total of 1,090,000 Euros) and an expert fund (for 510,000 Euros). The total cost of the programme is EUR 3,300,000.

The initiative follows a series of previous projects in similar areas: WELOD 1 and WELOD 2. The programme was supposed to last three years, but due to a delay on the part of MoWA in contributing 80% of the budget, the amount of 320,000 EUR had to be transferred and spent by MoSD. In addition

to the institutional bureaucracy (both on the Palestinian and the Italian side) that created further delays, the pandemic had an impact on the entire process.

The programme 's theory of change, not explicitly formalised by the Programme documents, was reconstructed by the evaluation team on the basis of an analysis of the relationship between objectives and expected results, on the one hand, and planned actions, on the other. Through the analysis of these elements, it is possible to identify the **theoretical algorithm** described below.

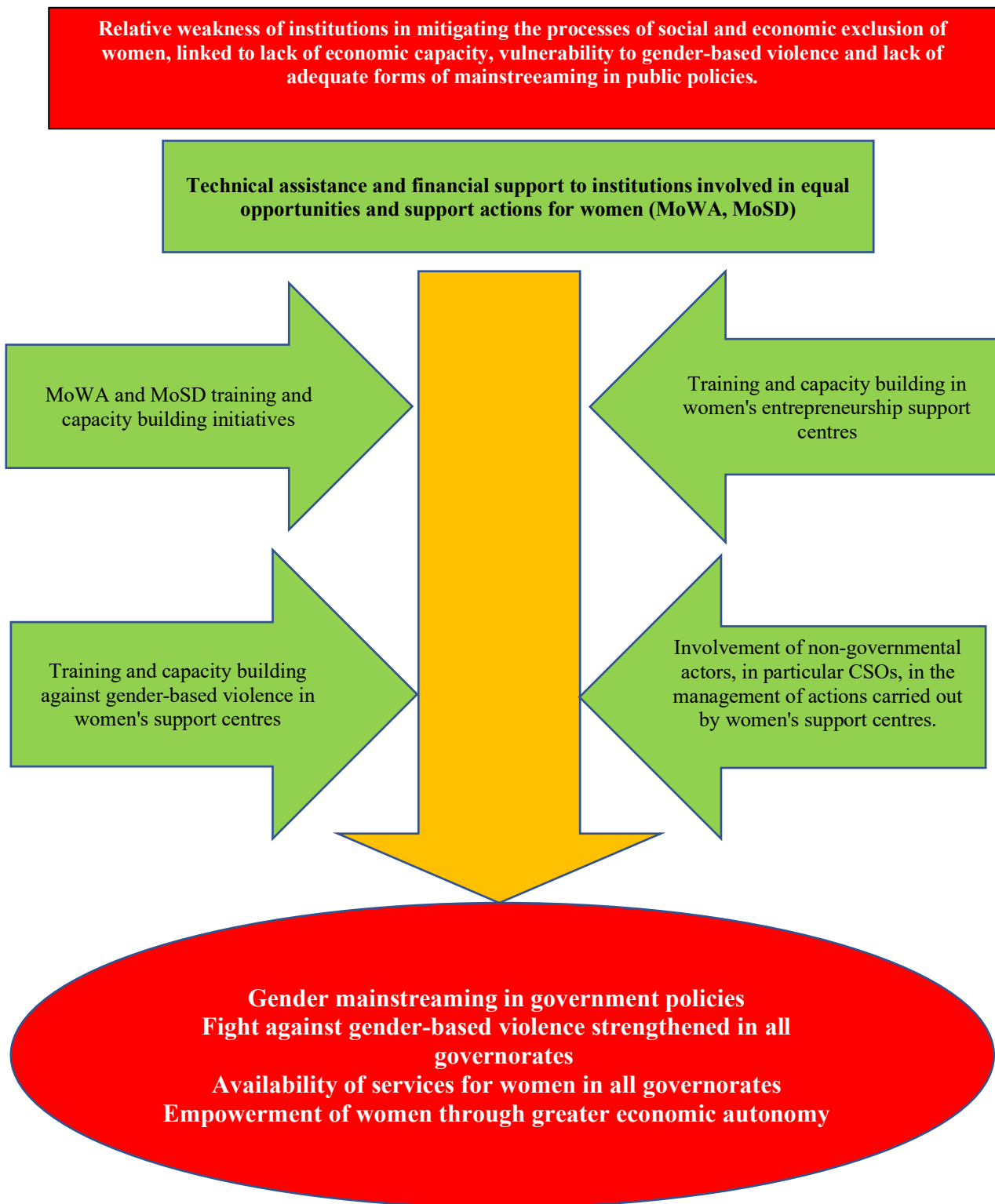
In a starting situation characterised by a relative weakness of public administrations and services for the protection of women's rights, as well as the presence of factors that prevent women's full social participation and keep them in a state of risk with respect to the dynamics of gender-based violence, some factors can produce significant improvements, in particular

- Gender mainstreaming in government policies;
- Strengthening the fight against gender-based violence;
- Strengthening public administrations and women's service centres;
- The initiation of women's empowerment processes, particularly with regard to starting up economic initiatives.

These factors can be strengthened through:

- training of public administrations responsible for actions in support of women, on gender planning, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of national plans;
- training and capacity-building against gender-based violence in women's support centres;
- training and capacity building in women's business support centres;
- the involvement of non-governmental actors, in particular civil society organisations (CSOs), in the management of actions carried out by women's support centres;
- the provision of technical assistance and financial support to institutions involved in equal opportunities and women's support actions (MoWA, MOSD).

The reconstruction of WELOD3 initiative's theory of change is depicted in the figure below.



The overall objective of WELOD3 programme is to increase economic development opportunities for Palestinian women and contribute to the implementation of international instruments for the defence of their rights.

In terms of **specific objectives**, the programme included:

- a. Strengthening the gender mainstreaming and anti-violence capacities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Governorates and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), now the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD);
- b. Strengthen women economically, politically, socially and culturally and, at the same time, combat gender-based violence by facilitating the reintegration into society of women who have suffered violence;
- c. Coordinate the cross-sectoral area 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' as European *Lead Donor*.

A number of **expected results** have been identified in relation to these objectives:

- Results for Specific Objective 1: Strengthen gender mainstreaming and anti-violence capacities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Governorates and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD).
- Results for specific objective 2: empower women economically, politically, socially and culturally and, at the same time, combat gender-based violence by facilitating the reintegration into society of women who have experienced violence.
- Results for Specific Objective 3: Coordinate the cross-sectoral area "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" as European *lead donor*.

The initiative included institutional and capacity-building actions for the ministries involved and the aid coordination structure, as well as support actions for the anti-violence services run by MoSD and the establishment of the first National Observatory on Women in Distress, Gender-based Violence and Stalking at MoWA.

In terms of beneficiaries, the initiative was aimed at:

- about 400 women who would benefit from the services provided by the 11 Tawasol and anti-violence services, including socio-economic *empowerment* activities and combating violence against women;
- about 20 children who should have benefited from anti-violence services;
- at least 200 Palestinian women's organisations and other civil society organisations working on behalf of women;
- at least 30 local Tawasol member institutions;
- local counterparts, i.e. MoWA staff, in particular heads of departments working with Tawasol centres (Policy and Planning; Training; Appeals);
- the Governorates, in particular: the 11 Tawasol Centres/Directors of the Women's and Children's Departments; 11 representatives of the future Tawasol Centres Re-integration Committees; 11 directors and/or technical staff of the legal departments of the Governorates;
- MoSD, in particular: the 11 heads of the Women and Children's department of the local MoSD directorates; the social workers of the local MoSD directorates;
- specialised operators who had to benefit from training, either at university level or in public facilities.

2.3.2 *Status of implementation of programme activities*

The activities envisaged in the programme proposal have been completed (for a comprehensive understanding of the entire work performed, see Section 5.3 Effectiveness). At the time of the evaluation, the planned audit at the Ministry of Finance was still ongoing and this, in formal terms, would still be considered an unfinished part of the programme. Regarding the end of the programme, the evaluation team recorded very different perceptions based on the different stakeholders: some of

them believed the programme would end in 2019 (Ministry of Women's Affairs), others in 2017 (some of the governorates interviewed), and still others in 2022 (AICS).

3. Objective of the evaluation

3.1 Evaluation scope and objectives

The evaluation aimed to verify the results achieved by the initiative in terms of impact, in order to ensure transparency and accountability. The evaluation exercise expressed an overall judgement on the relevance of the initiative's objectives in relation to priority local needs, as well as consistency with other initiatives of the Italian Cooperation and other donors.

Within this framework, as recommended by the specifications, the main objective of the evaluation was to

- verify whether the two components, one directly managed and the other government-assisted, can be considered the most effective for cooperation actions on gender issues, with the intention of replicating the action in other geographical areas, with particular reference to Middle Eastern countries;
- understand how mutual ownership and responsibility for development harmonised the actions of the actors involved;
- examine whether the initiative has strengthened the process of socio-economic empowerment of Palestinian women through training and coaching for the creation of women's enterprises in each governorate;
- assess whether the fight against gender-based violence, through the support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, promoted gender mainstreaming among Palestinian institutions included in the programme and training on gender planning, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of national plans.

3.2 Stakeholder Involvement

Through the stakeholder involvement activities, the evaluation was also strongly **oriented to produce useful information and recommendations for the improvement of cooperation interventions** in Palestine, with particular reference to the specific sector and issues considered (rights, equal opportunities, women's *empowerment*, gender *mainstreaming*, GBV, etc.). In fact, rather than merely measuring the implementation of activities, the evaluation was conceived as a **process of** analysing and assessing the **strengthening processes of** a set of actors, both governmental and non-governmental.

The evaluation exercise, therefore, did not simply include the analysis of the design and implementation of the initiative in question, but was also aimed at activating **learning processes** involving the various stakeholders and **improving the quality of the design** and management of ongoing initiatives. The individual and collective meetings thus had the dual purpose of gathering information on the evaluation criteria and on the actual status of *capacity building* and institutional strengthening.

3.3 The evaluation process

The evaluation process was characterised by the following actions: (a) mapping of the actions carried out and the actors involved; (b) collection of information on the actions carried out; (c) analysis of the actions according to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and

coherence; (d) identification of the modes of action and activities that showed the best performance, in particular from the point of view of relevance and effectiveness; (f) validation of the analysis; (g) formulation of operational recommendations on actions that could be carried out in the future.

This path was based on the **effective participation of the** different actors involved, who were considered not only as bearers of information related to the actions, their results and impacts, but also as bearers of different points of view, needs and objectives, which had to be considered in the complex Palestinian context, characterised by the accumulation of different processes, such as: the ongoing conflicts, the coexistence of different governance mechanisms, the coexistence of different religious groups, the coexistence of laws linked to religious denominations and 'traditional' customs, the presence of processes of social and cultural change often characterised by conflicts between secular and religious visions, the presence of family structures still often based on patriarchal models, and so on. Processes that, moreover, have different characteristics and consistencies in the various territorial areas, where 'modern' government structures enter into diversified relationships with pre-existing government structures, such as those linked to family ties, as well as with the mechanisms and dynamics of 'local power'.

The different steps that characterised the evaluation exercise and those that will concern the final stages of dissemination of its results are explained in more detail below.

Exploratory analysis and design: identification of problems and formulation of theoretical, methodological and technical tools.	Mapping of actions carried out and actors involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Acquisition and analysis of primary documentary sources b. Identification of the actors involved c. Identification of information sources (live sources and additional documentary sources) d. Identification of the main emerging issues and development of 'evaluation questions'. e. Formulation of technical tools for collecting information f. Drafting the initial report g. Discussion of the initial report with stakeholders (DGCS Evaluation Office, AICS experts, etc.).
In-depth analysis: information gathering and stakeholder consultation	Information gathering in several governorates, notably Ramallah, Bethlehem, Tulkarem, Jericho, Jenin, Gaza, Tubas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Interviews with key informants (in Italy and Palestine) b. Acquisition and analysis of additional documentary sources c. Field visits and direct observation of programme activities/implementations d. Interviews and collective meetings with local stakeholders involved in programme actions
Analysis and verification of information and formulation of the provisional evaluation report	<p>Analysis of actions from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and coherence.</p> <p>Identification of the activities and approaches that showed the best performance, particularly from the point of view of relevance and effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Processing and analysis of collected information b. Overall evaluation of projects c. Identification of good practices d. Formulation of provisional evaluation elements

Validation and discussion of the results of the analysis with stakeholders.	Validation of the analysis and identification of the most effective courses of action	a. Discussion of these provisional elements with local stakeholders (civil society organisations, IACS, national administration, university institutions).
Formulation and validation of recommendations	Formulation of recommendations, taking into account territorial differences. Formulation of an interim report Validation of recommendations and report	a. Formulation of recommendations b. Drafting the interim report c. Graphic design and provisional printing d. Validation of the report and recommendations in Ramallah and Rome
Review of the report		a. Review of the final report b. Translation of the report and summary into English c. Printing of the report and summary in Italian and English
Dissemination and dissemination of results		a. Support the evaluation office in the dissemination of results in Italy b. Organisation of a workshop (remote or in person) to disseminate the results in Ramallah.

4. Theoretical and methodological framework

4.1 The evaluation criteria

The analysis of the initiative and its implementation was conducted using the **categories proposed by the OECD** according to the new definition of December 2019, including the adoption of the **new criterion of 'coherence'**:

- **Relevance:** A measure of how well the objectives and design of the intervention correspond to the needs, policies and priorities of the beneficiaries, the country, the international community and partners/institutions and are also relevant in the changing context. This criterion answers the question: *"Does the intervention respond to the problem?"*
- **Coherence:** It measures the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in the country and in the same sector. In other words, the extent to which other interventions (especially policies) support or undermine the intervention and vice versa. This criterion answers the question: *"Is the intervention compatible with the other implemented interventions?"*
- **Effectiveness:** It measures how well the objectives and results of the intervention have been achieved or are being achieved, by including differentiated results among the various groups involved. This criterion answers the question: *"Does the intervention achieve its objectives?"*
- **Efficiency:** A measure of how well the intervention produces, or is able to produce, economic results within the planned timeframe. This criterion answers the question: *"Are resources optimally utilised?"*
- **Impact:** It measures how the intervention has produced, or is expected to produce, significant and far-reaching effects, positive or negative, intended or unintended. This criterion answers the question: *"What difference does the intervention make?"*
- **Sustainability:** A measure of the duration or likelihood that the net benefits of the intervention will last. This criterion answers the question: *"Will the benefits last?"*

4.1.1 Impact

As the initiative has now come to an end (with the exception of some aspects of financial reporting for the part related to support to the Palestinian government), the evaluation exercise paid particular attention to the **verification of its impact**, considering what effects the initiative itself generated in the context on which it intervened, both from the point of view of the practices and modes of intervention of the actors involved, and from the point of view of the changes produced on the broader context, such as, for example, the adoption of particular approaches by public services or other actors active in the issues addressed by the intervention, or at the level of public policies, particularly at the municipal and local level.

However, precisely because of this element of focus in the evaluation exercise, it is worth considering certain limitations in evaluating the impact itself. In fact, **an initiative geared towards the promotion of rights needs to be evaluated after a reasonable long time after its conclusion, so that lasting and visible effects are generated. Specifically, this is true** since these effects concern dimensions such as the legal one (particularly in relation to family law, children's and women's rights), the cultural and social one (particularly in relation to the social status of Palestinian women), and the organisational/administrative one (particularly in relation to protection mechanisms, within the social assistance and justice systems, and the relations between civil society organisations and the public administration). Rather than on 'established' impacts, the evaluation therefore focused on **transformation processes** and emerging short-term 'impact drivers' or, rather, **'impact trend lines'**.

4.1.2 Induced and unexpected effects and contextual reworking

Within the limits of the available financial and time resources, the evaluation team verified the existence of induced and/or unexpected effects of the implementation of the actions under the Programme.

This process, which we might define as the **"reinterpretation of the context"**, or even as the **"winning back of the context"**, is an **important indicator** of the success or failure of the change that every cooperation initiative inevitably proposes. Indeed, the direction of change desired by a programme or a cooperation programme does not always follow the same path, which is sometimes very schematic - and unfortunately standardised in its implementation methods - as that indicated by the logical framework.

The reworking by the context, or its 'revenge', therefore, has been taken into account by the evaluation exercise, thanks to the special attention that has been paid to what seems ancillary, or even extraneous, to the Programme and which is instead an **integral part** of it, even though it has not been foreseen.

4.1.3 The additional criterion of visibility and communication

In addition to the application of the six DAC/OECD criteria, a **further criterion**, that of **visibility/communication, was taken into consideration**. In fact, the communication aspect plays a central role in the implementation of the initiative, as it represents a fundamental tool for the impact on the social reality and, more generally, for the success of *lobbying* actions vis-à-vis institutional actors and political decision-makers.

With regard to visibility, the evaluation team verified both its correct application at the level of logos and symbols and, more generally, the perception by the main stakeholders of the **authorship of the Italian Cooperation's funding** to the various initiatives implemented within the Programme.

4.2 Evaluation Questions

A set of **evaluation questions**, related to the different evaluation criteria, and a set of useful **indicators** for the exercise were identified in the specifications and the technical proposal submitted. Documentary analysis activities and interviews conducted in the preparatory and start-up phase made it possible to revise these sets through a better calibration of both evaluation questions and indicators. The attached table (Annex 2) presents this revision work that guided the entire evaluation process of WELOD3 initiative in Palestine.

4.3 Difficulties encountered

The assessment team faced several difficulties, the most important of which was related to the **fluid security situation in the area**. At the end of April 2023, the situation in Gaza and the West Bank became very tense. This had a major impact on the planned mission plan, which had to be readjusted several times. The security situation not only restricted the movement of the Italian advisors, but also created a number of severe limitations for the Palestinian advisors. Moreover, the mobility of programme beneficiaries and key actors to be interviewed was very limited. Under these circumstances, the evaluation team had to identify areas other than those planned where interviews and *focus groups could be* organised. In the initial report, the areas identified for the evaluation exercise were: Ramallah, home to the main PA institutions, most expressions of Palestinian civil society and representatives of international actors; Tulkarem, Salfit, Tubas, Jericho, Bethlehem (characterised by very different organisational, political and socio-cultural structures). The following areas were supposed to be added (depending on the security situation): Jenin and Qalqilya. In practice, the team had access to the following areas: Ramallah; Tubas; Tulkarem; Jenin; Jericho; Bethlehem. With regard to Gaza, the team managed to organise several interviews with key actors of the intervention, but only virtually. In addition, the team had to supplement with virtual interviews in cases where additional information needed to be gathered (e.g. in the 'verification phase').

Despite the careful organisation, due to the highly unstable situation in Palestine during the month of May 2023, the team basically had to reorganise its activities every day, not knowing what could be done the next day, in terms of data collection.

Another important aspect that took up much of the evaluation team's time was the **identification and collection of documentation**. Indeed, both partners and stakeholders showed a general difficulty in listing the available relevant documents and their location. This created a practical problem in reconstructing situations and facts until the end of the data collection phase (7 June).

Reconstructing the entire process to identify the crucial aspects to be analysed in depth required tracing the direct beneficiaries, with particular relevance to the beneficiaries of Tawasol's services. However, the task proved more difficult than expected. In fact, two factors clearly proved to be problematic: a) **the lack of an adequate filing system** proved to be a real obstacle in tracing the beneficiaries of Tawasol's services, especially among women in need of protection or victims of GBV. It should be noted that, over the years, the core staff involved in the programme has changed almost completely, wiping out all possibilities of targeting individual memories to trace beneficiaries; b) **the delay in finalising the programme's activities**, already mentioned in the section on the presentation of the evaluation proposal, created a major gap. Women who benefited from services under the programme were no longer available in the same area or could not be traced. It is worth mentioning that with regard to the end date of the programme, the evaluation team recorded a general disagreement between the stakeholders and the partners themselves. This created quite a few difficulties in potentially finding beneficiaries.

On several occasions, the evaluation team asked MoWA staff to support the organisation of focus groups with women beneficiaries of Tawasol's services, but in the end, it was not possible to organise any. The main reasons were MoWA's own difficulties in tracing the beneficiaries who had not been listed correctly and whose characteristics had not been archived.

Concerning the difficulties at the level of the evaluation itself, the main one to **be underlined** is the difficulty in **planning the correct analysis to be carried out**, due to the ever-changing scenario in Palestine. The definition of samples is undoubtedly difficult in an area where the beneficiaries are unknown and, above all, in areas where they are not easily accessible due to security constraints.

Finally, it is interesting to report some comments on the methodological aspects of beneficiary consultation. **Consultation of beneficiaries**, direct and/or indirect, requires a good deal of preparation, especially when discussing sensitive issues (such as gender-based violence) in a culturally sensitive (strongly patriarchal) environment. Consequently, the team not only had to be prepared for a range of potential reactions, always in line with an attitude of respect for the traditional and cultural environment, but also had to be prepared to triangulate responses with other sources of information (to be sure that the collected data could be used). Furthermore, the evaluation team was aware that some questions could not be presented in a straightforward manner. For instance, 'thanks' to the intense media campaign by the Palestinian conservative parties against CEDAW, any questions related to the specific topic had to be formulated emphasising the aspects of women's rights and the link to international standards rather than CEDAW.

5. Results of the evaluation

5.1 Relevance

The Women Empowerment in Local Development, Phase 3 (WELOD) programme has a certain level of relevance in that it addresses the needs of Palestinian women and girls who suffer discrimination and frequent physical and psychological violence on a daily basis, due to the traditional patriarchal system in place and the Israeli settler occupation that severely restricts their movement and access to basic services. At the same time, it seeks to fill gaps in the institutional capacity building of the Ministries of Social Development (MoSD) and Women's Affairs (MoWA) in the areas of providing protection, counselling and accompaniment services for the reintegration of women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence. Therefore, in response to the need to reduce violence and discrimination and improve gender balance, the action involves (i) key Ministries such as MoSD and MoWA; (ii) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engaged in the promotion of rights, primary prevention of violence and protection of women and girls; (iii) local, traditional and religious public authorities, primarily Governorates and staff (police, legal assistants, judges, etc.); (iv) social workers, psychologists and social service personnel in charge of handling cases of violence; (v) men and boys from the target communities and the community as a whole, at whom actions to promote substantial changes in social behaviour are directed; (vi) girls who are victims of gender-based violence (VBG).

The intervention meets the needs of the Palestinian government and society to combat all forms of violence and to promote equality between women and men. In fact, it is aligned with policy strategies related to the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. Moreover, the action correctly addresses the need to promote the social transformation of discriminatory or violent attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls within the community.

However, the identification and design of the action did not sufficiently take into account the actual institutional capacities of the main actors, in particular MoWA and the governorates, which is clearly reflected in their limited operational capacity at the local level. Furthermore, although the action was designed taking into account the previously implemented steps, it did not include an adequate analysis of the state of existing human and professional resources within the structures of the two partner ministries, despite the fact that the weaknesses of the Palestinian partner ministries had been noted during the mid-term evaluation and review and during implementation.

The project design did not adequately and contextually express the final and intermediate steps necessary to adequately respond to the needs of the beneficiaries.

Finally, if relevance is interpreted as the evaluation criterion that most of all should allow an intervention to appreciate the multiplicity, plurality and even complexity of the system in which it is to operate, the intervention in question was not able to read and thus respond adequately to the needs of the Palestinian context in an up-to-date manner.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE IMPLEMENTED INTERVENTION RESPONDED TO THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE AREA OF RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS, SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRY?

Women and girls in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) continue to face discrimination and are at risk of gender-based violence (GBV). These critical issues stem from a fragmented and discriminatory legal system, harmful patriarchal norms, and an unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men. Other factors contributing to the risk are related to decades of Israeli occupation, conflict-related violence and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the lack of up-to-date information on acts of gender-based violence hinders a full understanding of the extent of the problem.

A study on the association between gender-based violence (GBV), well-being and mental health among Palestinian women revealed that in 2019, 59% of women and girls reported experiencing at least one form of gender-based violence by their husband (52% in the West Bank and 70% in Gaza). Of these, 57% had experienced psychological violence, 19% physical violence and 9% sexual violence, while 10% had experienced the emerging problem of cyberviolence. One third of women with disabilities who are married or have been married have experienced violence from their husbands²⁰.

Women and girls with disabilities, Bedouin women and those displaced or living in refugee camps are more vulnerable to violence. Limited employment opportunities and economic dependence on their husbands lead them not to report violence for fear of losing financial support and being discredited within the community.

Some areas, in particular parts of Gaza, isolated parts of Area C and East Jerusalem, also experience higher rates of gender-based violence, including relationship violence, sexual abuse and exploitation.

Access to sexual violence response services in all OPTs, already hampered by the Israeli occupation, was further hampered by COVID-19 restrictions and the military escalation in Gaza in May 2021. The latter led to the suspension of personal services such as legal aid, psychosocial support, VBG case management and community education during hostilities, further increasing the vulnerability of VBG survivors.

Finally, gender inequalities are evident in women's access to and participation in the workforce in Palestine, largely attributed to its particular economic, social and cultural context, as well as an environment that is not conducive to female entrepreneurship.

Efforts to align national legislation and policies with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have been hampered, mainly due to the fragmentation of Palestinian territory and the inability to convene the Palestinian Legislative Council. Despite the implementation of various measures, such as the launch of the second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, violence against women and girls persists and increases, and women's

²⁰ United Nations Population Fund, Country programme document for State of Palestine, pg.3

political and economic participation is limited. Efforts to include women in the labour market and improve their contribution to the Palestinian economy have also been a persistent goal for the public, private and civil society sectors, but progress remains slow and circumstances difficult.

From all this, it is possible to deduce a 'fluid', i.e. constantly evolving, complexity of the context.

WELOD3 programme was developed in this context to respond to the needs and priorities of increasing Palestinian women's socio-economic development opportunities and protecting their rights through two components: one of institutional strengthening through budget support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), and one of activities implemented directly by the Italian Cooperation Unit in Jerusalem with the participation of various civil society organisations, universities, protection centres (shelters), specialists and personnel employed in prevention, protection and combating sexual violence.

Responding to gender-based violence (GBV) is part of the mandate of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). MoSD social workers are responsible for assisting victims and survivors of gender-based violence. The social workers are located in the decentralised offices of MoSD. The 11 Tawasols are attached to the Women's and Children's Departments (conceived to become Gender Units in the future) of the 11 West Bank governorates - selected as WELOD3's area of focus - and are coordinated by the Directors of these Departments (within the organigram of the governorate - Tawasols are 'the person in charge of women and children').

The Tawasol 'centres' are actually desks, located within the Governorate office, as specifically requested by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), so that MoWA can have direct representation at the local level. The desk was equipped with WELOD1 and 2 funds, while the salary of the Tawasol officials is paid by the governorate.

Tawasols were created to link and facilitate access to the labour market and to accompany vulnerable women (particularly those who have survived acts of violence and discrimination) in the process of qualifying and finding work in order to achieve self-sufficiency. Therefore, these services were supposed to be a link between civil society and government institutions in order to obtain a realistic view of Palestinian women's needs. This specific organisation was supposed to help MoWA provide a responsive action through appropriate capacity-building and skills development activities, particularly aimed at women who, after receiving protection and health and psychological care, needed to rebuild their lives and those of their children through training and professional qualification to access the labour market.

Failure to map the main characteristics of partners, main actors and especially beneficiaries compromised the ability of the initiative to adhere to the context in a relevant way.

The proposed approach aimed to cover the main needs, but lacked a governance scheme, which in fact is not included in the intervention design, to manage the interrelationships between all the stakeholders with different interests and capacities. As an example, it can be mentioned that the most relevant coordination mechanism reported during the programme implementation is the Consultative Committee established among the main stakeholders (AICS, MoWA, MoSD and Ministry of Finance - MoF-, manager of funds for the Institutional Budget Support Facility), which, however, was not able to adequately respond to the capacities and coordination needs of the programme and the main stakeholders.

Moreover, the programme structure did not provide for any monitoring and evaluation mechanism and plan. As a result, the entire intervention does not provide any means to adjust the implementation of activities or to identify potential major shortcomings through a mid-term evaluation.

The intervention design does not include an adequate gender *mainstreaming* strategy, nor technical assistance to accompany MoWA during implementation. It seems that WELOD3 was conceived as a mere continuation of WELODs 1 and 2, rather than the result of a thorough and up-to-date analysis of real needs and available resources (no needs assessment was carried out).

Furthermore, based on the documents describing WELOD3 logframe, the programme is inspired by the Theory of Change (ToC), focusing on both a vision to be achieved and a set of needs (at the institutional, social and community levels) to be addressed. Unfortunately, neither the logframe (LF) - or logical framework - nor the indicators were selected and set to assess a change in needs and target priorities.

It seems that WELOD3 was conceived, therefore, as a continuation of the WELOD 1 and 2 programmes, rather than as an initiative in continuum with the previous ones, but updated to the Palestinian context under consideration, even though a new need such as the socio-economic *empowerment* of women victims and/or survivors of violence was actually identified and added. In fact, an adequate response to such needs was not formulated in the project's logical framework, nor was a new logical chain including such 'needs'.

The logical framework is not adapted to provide an effective programme management tool, nor is any internal monitoring system used for an accurate description of its performance.

The vertical logic chain is correctly articulated between the General Objective (GO) ("to increase Palestinian women's socio-economic development opportunities and contribute to the implementation of international instruments for the defence of their rights"), three Specific Objectives (SO) that serve as intermediate outcomes aimed at achieving the GO (SO1: "to strengthen the gender *mainstreaming* and anti-violence capacities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Governorates and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)"; SO2: "strengthen the process of economic, political, social and cultural *empowerment* of Palestinian women and, at the same time, counteract violence by fostering the social reintegration of women who have experienced violence"; SO3: "coordinate the cross-sectoral area '*Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*' as the European *Lead Donor*") and 12 outcomes (Rs) of which three contribute to the achievement of SO1, four to SO2 and four to SO3. The description of activities as inputs/resources to be implemented is provided and the selection of verification sources is appropriate. Finally, assumptions are also included, which are stated in correspondence with the results or objectives.

The formulation of the SOs and results is unclear. For example, SO3 is unrelated to SO1&2, formulated as an activity, and does not refer to any positive benefits or effects that may result from promoting policies or actions at the national level to combat GBV and promote equality. Similarly, the SO2 appears as a repetition of the OO. The results are too vague, some are unrelated to the SOs and do not mention the desired effects, such as SO 2.2 raising awareness of social enterprise and local women's production or SO 2.5. Errors in the wording hinder the correct measurement of results and their contribution to the achievement of the MDs. Furthermore, no baseline was conducted and consequently no value or target data was defined, so measuring results is difficult and quantitative measurement is not feasible.

The horizontal logic is very poor: indicators are poorly formulated and not robust, none of the objectively verified indicators (OVIs) are SMART or RACER, and, although many of them refer to women, they are generally not gender-sensitive (those established to measure *capacity building* activities do not provide a gender balance - number of men, women, girls, boys... -). No indicators have been defined at impact level (to measure the progress of OO).

The indicators related to the Specific Goals, while remaining relevant, cannot be used to measure progress because, in addition to the lack of target values, they do not refer to any output and result

achieved, such as "SO1.A. Government policies and actions for the socio-economic *empowerment of women* are promoted, monitored and evaluated according to national plans" or "SO2.C. The community is informed about women's social enterprise and policies and actions against gender-based violence'. Some indicators are only a repetition of those mentioned as sources of verification (such as indicator SO1.D. Governorships are aware of international instruments to combat gender-based violence and apply the National Referral System for individual cases). Indicators defined under Results are rather indicators measuring the progress of activities, such as OVI "1.2.1. The implementation of national gender plans reflects gender markers and is monitored and evaluated"; in some cases they are only a duplication of the indicators related to the objectives, such as OVI 1.1 "Tawasol centres are integrated in the National Reference System for employment guidance. No. of new women's enterprises activated" and SO1.E. "Tawasol centres are integrated in the national reference system for work orientation and protection from violence".

5.2 Consistency

The programme has a high degree of internal and external coherence at the level of all partners involved.

Internal coherence concerns synergies and interdependencies between interventions of the same institution/administration as well as coherence between the intervention and relevant international standards and criteria to which the institution/administration adheres. From the point of view of **internal coherence**, the programme fully respects the Italian Cooperation guidelines and the international standards and criteria adopted in the field of women's rights and gender issues.

External coherence concerns coherence between the intervention under consideration and those implemented by other actors in the same context; external coherence includes complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with other actors and verifies that the intervention adds value by avoiding overlaps with other actions.

5.2.1 Internal Coherence

WHAT ARE THE SYNERGIES AND INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE INTERVENTION AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS CONDUCTED BY THE SAME BODY AND IN RELATION TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS (INTERNAL COHERENCE)?

Human rights and gender equality represent a strategic sector for Italian Cooperation in Palestine. With a long history of commitment, it encompasses the economic and social empowerment of women and the promotion of their participation in the public sphere, the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, as well as the promotion and defence of human rights and the promotion of a culture that respects the dignity of people. AICS Jerusalem's commitment to the promotion of a society based on human rights and gender equality was reaffirmed by Italy's leading position as a donor in this area within the framework of EU joint programming.

MoWA's mandate is to promote influence on policy and law-making, to network with women's organisations, governmental bodies and civil society organisations at regional and international levels, and to exchange experiences in the implementation of international agreements on women and human rights. With regard to awareness-raising, MoWA is very proactive at different levels. Furthermore, MoWA aims to improve women's participation in the economy, increase their representation in the labour market, reduce poverty, extreme poverty and unemployment rates, and ensure access to family law and civil rights that guarantee equality and justice.

Among other functions, MoSD, as part of its mandate, manages the Mehwar Centre and pays the salaries of civil servants in addition to the running costs of the centre. WELOD3 programme aims to support, sustain and develop the overall work of the Mehwar Centre as a high quality shelter service, unique in Palestine.

It can be said that internal consistency is fully respected.

5.2.2 External Coherence

External coherence concerns coherence between the intervention under consideration and those implemented by other actors in the same context; external coherence includes complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with other actors and verifies that the intervention adds value by avoiding overlaps with other actions.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE PROGRAMME COMPATIBLE WITH INTERVENTIONS BY OTHER ACTORS IN THE SAME SECTOR?

WELOD3 is fully in line and compatible with the interventions of other actors.

For instance, the MDG-F programme for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) was implemented by six UN agencies in an attempt to address gender-based violence (GBV), violence against women (VAW), women's political participation and equal economic rights in a joint effort, strengthening the national effort to protect gender.

The programme is aligned with the national development plan and the priorities set for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 (the implementation period of WELOD3) aimed to establish an independent state that guarantees security, safety and equality under the rule of law. It prioritised social justice and the rule of law, emphasising compliance with the 55 international treaties and conventions Palestine has acceded to since 2011, many of which guarantee human rights and assign responsibilities to the state. Gender equality and women's *empowerment* were highlighted as crucial goals within this agenda, with the aim of eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as removing barriers to women's full participation in community, economic and public life²¹.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO POLICIES RECOGNISING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS SUPPORT OR UNDERMINE INTERVENTION AND VICE VERSA?

Women's support policies, in general terms, support the strategy and objectives of the intervention.

Some policies at the national level include international standards in the field of gender issues. Among others: the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women; the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325; the National Policy Agenda (2017-2022); the National Development Plans.

In the National Intersectoral Plan 2017-2022²², the goal of economic participation was expressed in the form of 'enhancing women's participation in the economic sector' which includes five policies: (i) Promoting decent work standards for women in the public, private, domestic and international sectors operating in Palestine; (ii) Adopting stimulative and protective legislation for small businesses and women workers; (iii) Empowering women entrepreneurs and people with disabilities to obtain the necessary finance and skills; iv) Increasing the competitiveness of women's product organisations nationally, regionally and globally; v) Developing an organised and effective vocational and technical

²¹ <http://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/WebSite/Upload/Documents/GOVPLAN/NPA%20English.pdf>

²² Cross-sectoral National Strategy Paper for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Equity and the Empowerment of Women (2017-2022), p. 40. <https://www.mowa.pna.ps> 36. N

education and training system to support the labour market with skilled and semi-skilled labour of both sexes. These aspects are all strongly interconnected with the objectives of the intervention.

However, there are challenges, common to all key actors operating in Palestine, that limit and/or hinder the full achievement of goals such as those outlined in WELOD3. As reported in '*Bridging the Gender Gap: Mapping and Analysis of Gender Policies in Palestine - GPI*', a number of challenges critically limit the design, scope and implementation of policies and, moreover, are largely outside the influence of decision-makers and *stakeholders* working on gender equality and women's rights. Some of these challenges include: (a) The increasing geographical fragmentation of the West Bank and Gaza, which divides communities along barriers of separation; (b) The growing influences of regional religious, political and cultural conservatism that is affecting growing segments of Palestinian society and negatively impacting the status of women; (c) The policies and financial contributions of foreign governments have a direct impact on access to resources for the Palestinian Authority and civil society organisations; a reduction in resources or a change in their focus could have a significant impact on work related to gender equality and women's rights.

HOW WAS THE INTERVENTION HARMONISED/COORDINATED WITH OTHER ACTORS IN THE SAME SECTOR?

The external coherence of WELOD3 is quite high, as it embraces jointly promoted international themes and processes. The 'European Joint Strategy (EJS) in Support of Palestine 2021-2024', endorsed by the European Development Partners (EDP), provides a framework for the development cooperation partnership between European states and the Palestinian government. The objectives of the EJS are: to increase the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of European development cooperation in Palestine. It focuses on supporting Palestine to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Results-Oriented Framework (ROF) monitors the results of EDP countries' development cooperation at the sectoral level, generating evidence for EDP countries' programming. The ROF serves to monitor the implementation of the EJS, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of European financial support to Palestine by monitoring progress towards planned joint development results, sectoral changes and reform processes. It promotes mutual accountability, transparency and predictability and is also a tool for policy dialogue with the Palestinian Authorities (PA) and evidence-based decision-making, including for future programming. The ROF focuses on impact outcomes and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as on results (changes sustained by EDP programmes in the field). It also highlights a number of sector-induced outcomes, i.e. improvements and reforms in Palestinian public policies and legal and regulatory frameworks necessary to achieve the final results. Italy/Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) is part of the coordination mechanism with all other donors and key stakeholders in a joint European effort to achieve international standards for Palestine in the gender sector. The Gender Sector Working Group (GSWG), established in October 2021 as part of the *Local Aid Coordination Secretariat* (LACS), is chaired by MoWA, with Italy as vice-chair. Regarding the 'legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination', at the time of the evaluation there is still no political will to publish the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), despite the recommendations of the treaty bodies. Palestine acceded to CEDAW in April 2014, without making reservations to any of its articles. However, CEDAW has not yet been published in the Official Journal and the provisions of the Convention have not yet been incorporated into domestic law, which is necessary to translate them into binding domestic law. Moreover, Palestine has not ratified the Optional Protocol, which is a critical accountability mechanism. In 2022, efforts to review and harmonise legislation to ensure compliance with CEDAW have stagnated. The *Family Protection Bill* (FPB) is still awaiting adoption by the President. All these aspects see Italy and MoWA deeply involved in supporting the mentioned processes.

5.3 Effectiveness

WELOD3 lacks solid evidence-based effectiveness. The lack of ownership shown mainly by MoWA, the still weak capacities of institutions at the central and local levels, the absence of coordination and adequate articulation between the two involved institutions considerably limited the generation of positive effects on the prevention of violence against persons and the *empowerment* of women. In fact, the different components of the action have been implemented in a separate manner with regard to the various stakeholders. Consequently, the results were not consolidated and did not produce an overall positive outcome.

However, based on the evidence gathered, it should be noted that the following positive effects were produced. Under the first intervention component, aimed at (1) enhancing the capacities of MoWA and MoSD in supporting gender equality and addressing GBV and women's *empowerment*, a progress was observed in the improvement of protection services, offered by shelters, in particular the study opportunities offered through scholarships awarded to victims and young survivors of violence, which are currently the most effective implemented activities. Other important results were achieved under the second component, aimed at (2) improving the awareness of women's and young girls' rights, prevention and anti-violence initiatives through the involvement of NGOs, in particular in the implementation of a comprehensive awareness-raising action, which involved boys and girls and reached the community at different levels, enabling the dissemination of key messages to produce transformation and change in the social fabric.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE ACTIVITIES UNDER THE PROGRAMME BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

In order to properly analyse the effectiveness of the programme, this section will report on each individual activity, duly grouped by S.O.

5.3.1 S.O.1 analyzed

Activity (A) 1.1. MoWA budget support for women's socio-economic empowerment policies and services

There is evidence that the Tawasol 'centres' were set up as desks located within the 11 government offices nation-wide, as expressly requested by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), in agreement with AICS, in order to improve MoWA's operations at the local level. The desk was equipped thanks to WELOD funding (1 and 2), while the salary of the Tawasol officer is paid by the governorate²³.

As reported during the interviews, this activity incorporated at least three *capacity-building* initiatives, mainly aimed at improving the services of the 11 Tawasols in providing guidance and skills development for the socio-economic empowerment of women. The training courses organised with the support of NGOs or higher education institutions (such as SHAMS, Institute of Women's Studies at Berzeit University, etc.) covered various topics, from legal assistance to be provided to victims of violence to reintegration opportunities. Considering that the courses were not conducted recently, it was not possible to collect sufficient evidence and data to understand whether the Tawasol staff acquired the expected skills to promote women's socio-economic *empowerment*.

On the policy side, WELOD3 made little contribution. There is some perceived commitment to supporting the urgent passage of the Family Law.

A.1.2. MoWA budget support for gender training and programming

According to reports, during the last year of implementation conducted by MoWA (2019), a workshop organised by that ministry in cooperation with the *Palestinian Anti-corruption Coalition*

²³ It is not yet clear whether WELOD3 funds were also used to finance a specific percentage of Tawasol's salaries.

(PACC) and the General *Personnel Council* (GPC), focusing on the role women play in fighting corruption within institutions, was attended by Gender Unit and Tawasol staff. Under Activity 1.2, the first 'National Gender Sensitive Media Conference' was held in Ramallah. A group of 17 media and communication companies active in Palestine presented their action strategy to promote gender equality in the Palestinian media and combat negative stereotypes about the role of women.

Finally, MoWA took the lead in the planning and implementation process of the '16 Days of Activism on Violence Against Women and Girls', in collaboration with UN Women and women's organisations. Together, they worked to define the theme of the year and develop the campaign messaging. This national and collective effort ensured the adoption of unified messages and coordinated events throughout.

In general terms, the human resources included in the action owned the necessary knowledge and experience to adequately implement the intervention, however, from the interviews, it can be seen that MoWA does not have enough staff to be assigned full-time to manage the activities, and the staff still lacks a good knowledge of gender approaches (despite the numerous training courses attended by the staff within the framework of other projects funded by the Italian Cooperation and other donors). People are used to attending training courses on every conceivable topic, without any impact assessment parameters.

A. 1.3. MoSD budget support for the protection and care of women and children victims of violence

Support to activities organised within the Mehwar shelter and for capacity building of the ministry staff, particularly social workers.

According to reports produced by MoSD, various activities such as entertainment, sports, education, etc. were organised in the Mehwar centre for the benefit of the women housed in the centre. According to the interviewees, these activities have, however, declined over time, especially after the centre was placed entirely under the responsibility of MoSD by UNFPA, UN Women and AICS.

5.3.2 S.O.2 analyzed

Activity (A) 2.1: Training and coaching for women's business start-ups

Based on the evaluation of the business ideas developed by the women, who participated in the training organised by 11 Tawasols during the implementation of WELOD 2, the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) of Birzeit University identified 5 viable and sustainable business proposals to be supported with further training and coaching activities and to be handed over to specialised organisations. This activity did not produce any results at the level of the business idea developed, as noted during the fieldwork and through the interviews.

In 2016-2017, training, facilitated by the '*Business Women Forum*' - BWF, on women entrepreneurship, business plan writing, customer identification and economic feasibility was organised for 16 beneficiaries from the various governorates and Tawasols.

Considering the positive evaluation provided by the beneficiaries, a second phase of a larger intervention was organised and a further 54 beneficiaries were trained by the BWF.

Taking into account the results of the training evaluation, jointly promoted by MoSD, MoWA and the Tawasol coordinators, a review of the role of Tawasols in the area of women's economic *empowerment* was prepared, with the development of a detailed *road-map* and the identification of key training needs.

In 2017-2018, a series of training courses organised by the Tawasols, with the involvement and facilitation of NGOs (such as El MIFTAH), were implemented. Groups of women, up to 25 each (including women entrepreneurs - SMEs), benefited from the trainings on "Women's Economic Empowerment" (*business plan*; creation and management of small and medium enterprises; micro-credit)". As reported during the interviews, the training recipients ranged from women already with entrepreneurial experience to young apprentices.

A.2.2 Raising public awareness of social enterprise and local women's production

Local funds were allocated by AICS to local NGOs such as Shashat, El Miftah and REFORM, to implement initiatives to promote community awareness of the importance of supporting women's roles.

Shashat organised a workshop for boys and girls from Qualquilia, Selfit and Jenin. The workshops aimed to break traditional stereotypes of gender roles, prevent discrimination and develop positive thinking. In addition, the workshops aimed to strengthen community resilience and spread messages of positive masculinity, encouraging women and girls to have a voice and participate in decision-making spaces at all levels. The REFORM organisation trained 15 adolescents, girls and boys on social transformation, breaking stereotypes and promoting community change.

Workshops and training courses aimed at adolescents focused on:

- *Lobbying* and communication;
- Film production;
- Social journalism;
- Gender and media;
- Audiovisual techniques;
- Project planning and design.

The Tawasol centres promoted the following activities:

- local awareness-raising campaigns on women's legal, economic, health and citizenship rights involving about 50 women per governorate, totalling about 550 women with *spill-over* to the surrounding community;
- awareness-raising events to combat violence against women and to reintegrate women victims of violence into society, such as participation in ceremonies on the occasion of 8 March and the '16 Days for Combating Gender Violence', as well as local women's handicraft fairs (at least two fairs: in Jordan and Turkey), awards for women *role models* in Palestinian society, and *sit-ins* in strategic locations such as ministries and international organisations. Each event involved a minimum of 100 women per governorate for a total of 1,100 beneficiaries.

A.2.3. Establishment of a new Tawasol Centre in Gaza Governorate

The establishment of the Tawasol centre in Gaza was preceded by a skill- needs assessment study in the area of intervention, which was the subject of a *call for proposals* launched by AICS through a public workshop to disseminate the initiatives, and to orient participants on the focus that should be given to the assessment. The proposal of the NGO *Women Affairs Technical Committee* (WATC) was the one selected, and the study was entrusted to it in 2016. WATC has an operational office in Gaza, which facilitated the implementation of the survey through locally recruited staff. This ensured operability and proximity to the research area.

The study lasted three months and was completed in 2017. After the completion of the needs assessment, a second workshop was organised to disseminate the results and main findings of the assessment.

During the interviews, it was specified that the study is not available in digital format. However, the NGO stated that the study is particularly relevant considering that the evaluation highlighted five strategic priorities:

1. Protection
2. Circumstances and origin of poverty
3. Finding work for young women
4. Economic *empowerment* - IGA for women

Social and psychological support Unfortunately, the construction of the centre was not finalized due to political differences between the PA, in particular between MoWA, a strong supporter of the establishment of a Tawasol centre in Gaza, and the de-facto government of Gaza. During the same period in which the study was conducted, there were moments of tension between the de-facto government in Gaza and international organisations, including following the death of some Italian activists in the area. Considering the existing tensions and political disagreements, AICS decided to abandon the idea of building the centre.

WATC offered to support *advocacy* activities in favour of setting up the centre, believing that the need to install such a service in a particularly vulnerable area was a concrete response to the problems related to the spread of gender-based violence. However, WATC could not guarantee concrete political mediation, as such activities were not within its mandate as a non-governmental association.

After the presentation of the study, several exchanges took place between AICS, MoWA and WATC, but given the fragile political moment Gaza finds itself in, the decision to abandon the construction of the centre was later confirmed by AICS.

However, WATC successfully implemented awareness-raising activities to encourage access to legal rights/services and to emphasise the importance of assistance to be provided also to women with disabilities.

A.2.4. Creation of university training modules for professionals in gender-based violence prevention and victims assistance

In order to increase MoSD capacity to respond to cases of violence and to support the development of skills to carry out counselling, 3 courses were funded under WELOD3. The third course (43 hours of training) was completed in 2018 and was tailored to meet the skills needs of social workers. The idea was to bring together all areas: legal, sociological and psychological. At the end of the course, an assessment was conducted on learners' needs, core values and ethical dilemmas. The course should have been integrated into the academic curricula, but lack of funding prevented the full accomplishment of the activity.

Based on the statements of the interviewees, the course structure was designed to analyse violence in a comprehensive manner, including the concept of social trauma of victims, taking into account the needs of social workers and police officers for such skills.

A.2.5. Training on the use of international instruments to combat gender-based violence and the application of the national case management system

A total of 21 seminars were conducted in 10 governorates (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, Tubas, Salfit, Tulkarem, Nablus, Jenin and Jericho). Community outreach plans were also carried out for a total of 166 women's organisations and local CBOs. A final event/conference on the National Referral System (Takamol) was organised in 2016.

Based on the information gathered during the focus groups conducted with Tawasols, in 2016/2017 all its representatives were trained on:

- Networking and awareness-raising;
- Production and broadcasting of television dramas;
- Promotion of women's rights.

Tawasols were also involved in the dissemination of international knowledge and tools used to combat violence against women to civil society organisations that are members of Tawasols network (a total of 250 beneficiaries): 10 seminars were conducted by local NGOs with expertise in the field of human rights and women's protection, such as Al-Haq, Women's *Center for Legal Aid and Counseling* (WCLAC), *Defense for Children International* (DCI) and the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) in 10 Tawasol Centres on issues related to women's rights and their regulation at the international and local levels.

A media network strategy has been developed as a long-term cultural commitment to eliminate discrimination against women.

A.2.6. Facilitating the reintegration of women victims of violence into society

Advocacy activities have been promoted through a conference on the exchange of best practices and the state of the art of the family protection law process. A vocational training for women survivors was conducted by the INAD Centre for Theatre and Artistic Association. At the beginning of the intervention, further vocational trainings were conducted for the benefit of the protected women. A total of 10 sessions were conducted on: 1. hand sewing and sewing (traditional) (4 sessions) and hand recycling (6 sessions); 2. hairdressing and make-up for sheltered women using the new Mehwar Centre facility (beauty salon) (15 sessions); 6 scholarships were awarded to battered girls and GBV survivors from different governorates (Nablus, Hebron and Jenin) to pursue university studies. Three of them enrolled at Al Quds Open University and the fourth at Al Najah University. Of these, two were hired by the Mehwar Centre and the other two by the Family Defence Society/Nablus. The scholarship programme specifically targeted women victims of GBV, housed in the Mehwar shelter, with the aim of supporting their reintegration by enabling them to continue their studies. The selection criteria for the programme included a willingness to continue their studies, a difficult economic situation and the inability to pay school fees. The programme provided financial assistance by covering school fees and offering a small amount for daily expenses. In total, 24 women benefited from this scholarship initiative.

Finally, a study on the reintegration into society of women victims of violence was conducted by the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University and completed in 2016. Published in both Arabic and English, it was presented at a conference and distributed to university departments, civil society organisations and donors dealing with gender issues. The study can be considered as a preliminary research on the topic of reintegration of women victims of violence after leaving anti-violence centres on the ground.

A.2.7 Public awareness-raising on women's empowerment policies and combating gender-based violence, social communication and visibility, international seminars

The local associations AGAIN (of the Dansewood Association) and Al Harah produced two plays, thirteen performances of 'WOMB' ('womb') were organized in the target area of intervention. A workshop was also conducted with Al-Harah and Dansewoods artists together with the organisations that are part of the Tawasol centres on the effects of infertility on the psycho-physical well-being of women and the family.

The theatre association Inad Centre for Theatre and Arts was requested to develop a manual on good practices for the *empowerment of women through theatre*; unfortunately, no copies of the toolkit were available at the time of the evaluation.

A second survey was conducted by the Centre for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in 2016 (with the collaboration of external experts) on women's informal employment in Palestine, its causes and implications ('Women's Informal Employment in Palestine: Key Characteristics, Challenges and Recommendations for Future Strategic Interventions').

Finally, as part of the worldwide campaign '16 Days to Fight Gender Violence' (25 November to 10 December 2019), an awareness-raising campaign was launched through the radio network Radio Nisaa.

5.3.3 S.O.3 analyzed

Activity 3.1. Coordination of the group of European member countries active in the Palestinian Territories on gender equality and women's empowerment issues aimed at sharing the strategy for women's economic empowerment and combating gender-based violence

European member states have joined forces to develop a joint strategy in support of Palestine. This strategy provides the framework for coordinated programming and serves as a strategic umbrella for the bilateral programming and implementation plans of the EU's development partners. One example is the recent Joint European Strategy in Support of Palestine 2021-2024, entitled 'Towards a Democratic, Accountable and Sustainable Palestinian State'. This strategy provides an opportunity for the European Development Partners to improve their coherence and strengthen core principles, including democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for human dignity, equality, solidarity and adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and international law. The overall objective of the European Development Partners (EDPs) within this strategy is to promote Palestinian statehood prospects, contribute to sustainable economic and social development in Palestine, and advance human rights and democratisation. Gender equality has been identified as a cross-cutting issue within the strategy, with a focus on contributing to SDG5. Furthermore, this joint strategy places specific emphasis on the need to ensure gender-responsive laws and regulations, as well as gender-responsive budgeting and planning. Gender aspects are also considered cross-cutting under Pillar 5: Sustainable Economic Development, which includes areas such as private sector development and trade, agriculture and labour²⁴.

These plans allow European member states to make well-informed decisions about their bilateral support to Palestine. The approach to funding adopted by European countries is rooted in human rights principles, which integrate gender into the various interventions.

Italy and MoWA are very active on this front as part of the **Gender Sector Working Group (GSWG)** established in October 2021 within the *Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS)*, chaired by MoWA and with Italy as *Deputy Chair*. Several meetings were promoted and implemented to coordinate efforts and results with all other key stakeholders.

A.3.2. Coordination and drafting of annual reports on the implementation of the EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2010-2015 (GAP).

Since 2014, a liaison has been established between the Italian Cooperation (UTL first and AICS later) and the EU Delegation in Jerusalem; a potential collaboration is currently being discussed in the framework of the new EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women, which also concerns the promotion of WELOD outcomes. Based on the analysis of the reports, the Italian Cooperation contributed to the development of the European GAP 2014-2015. No further evidence of further contributions to the updating of the GAP could be found.

²⁴ <https://south.euneighbours.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/European-Joint-Strategy-2021-2024.pdf>

A.3.3. Support to Palestinian institutions in gender mainstreaming policies in the framework of the division of labour in the various sectors of ODA in the Palestinian Territories

The concrete support of intervention to institutions in gender *mainstreaming* policies is evident in several aspects, in particular:

- The Palestinian National Development Plan 2021-2023 includes several national policies that outline the government's strategic direction to improve the lives of Palestinians. One of the key policy agendas, number 20, focuses on gender equality and the *empowerment of women*. This policy emphasises Palestine's commitment to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women and to combat gender-based violence. Palestine also aspires to remove all obstacles to women's full participation in community and economic development and public life²⁵.
- The mentioned Gender Technical Working Group (GSWG), during its meetings in October 2021 and May 2022, MoWA expressed the government's genuine political will to consider the *Family Protection Bill* (FPB) as a national necessity and reiterated its willingness to contribute to the approval and concrete implementation of the law in Palestine. Italy and the members of the *Gender Technical Working Group* remain committed to supporting the passage of the law and providing financial and technical support to ensure its timely implementation²⁶.

A.3.4. Participation of local and international civil society in national strategic plans and proposals for response actions

The most significant contribution made by civil society (such as the REFORM organisation) to policy-making is the extension of the maternity leave period from 72 to 90 days.

The participation of the NGO *Rural Women Development Society*, El MFTAH was also recorded in several events organised through WELOD3 on women entrepreneurship.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THE INTERVENTION WAS CARRIED OUT?

WELOD3 focuses on strengthening women's national and individual identities, fostering self-confidence and promoting equality and teamwork with men. Within this framework, MoWA and MoSD are the most suitable partners to lead the consolidation of democratic principles, social justice and government engagement on gender issues to advance women's rights and improve their political, economic and social roles.

The response to gender-based violence (GBV) is part of the mandate of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). MoSD social workers are also responsible for assisting victims and survivors of gender-based violence. The social workers are located within the decentralised offices of MoSD. Currently, the 11 Tawasols are included in the Women and Children's Departments (designed to become Gender Units in the future) of the 11 West Bank governorates - selected as WELOD3's area of focus - and are coordinated by the Directors of these Departments (within the governorate's organisational chart - the Tawasol is 'the person in charge of women and children') In practical terms, MoWA emphasised during an interview with key staff members that the most effective approach to mobilising the role of Tawasols would be to transform them into semi-governmental entities. This transformation would involve members of civil society organisations, government and academia.

²⁵ https://andp.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/National%20Development%20Plan%202021-2023_English.pdf

²⁶ Report on the Implementation of the Common European Strategy 2021-2024 2021: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/European%20Joint%20Strategy%20Annual%20Report%20%202021.pdf>

Under this model, Tawasols would be administratively accountable to the governorate, while retaining technical accountability to MoWA.

MoWA aims to improve women's participation in the economic sector, increase their representation in the labour market, reduce poverty, extreme poverty and unemployment rates, and ensure access to family law and civil rights that guarantee equality and justice. In addition, the ministry focuses on maintaining the citizenship and residency rights of Jerusalemite women, institutionalising gender equality and justice, empowering women in official institutions, improving the quality of life of poor and marginalised families, and enhancing health, social and educational services for women in Palestine.

In this context, Tawasol (which means communication/connection in Arabic) centres were created²⁷, with the intention of providing a complementary response to the needs of victims and survivors and vulnerable women. According to the original conception of civil society, Tawasols were supposed to assist women during the rehabilitation process, in addition to the protection and assistance provided by the shelters and social workers under the responsibility of MoSD and the safe spaces managed by the UNFPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Although Tawasols were not intended to interfere with or duplicate existing services, in most cases, victims of violence confused the role of Tawasols with that of social workers, thus turning to the governorate for assistance, sometimes even in the form of cash transfers.

When the Tawasol were established, their first activity was to create a network of women's organisations in their respective governorates. These networks were in charge of recruiting women beneficiaries of the programme activities, especially training. The network is still active, but under the guidance of consultants from the Gender Unit in the governorates.

The women selected for the training courses, on the other hand, were in most cases selected with the support of the NGO network associated at the time of the establishment of the Tawasol coordination. Since the reports of the training activities are not available, it is not possible to define the percentage of victims and survivors of violence who actually participated in the training courses, nor the percentage of those who, among the beneficiaries, were able to engage in productive activities.

In spite of the weak achievement of the above-mentioned results, it is noted that a significant benefit brought by the programme concerns the active involvement of various actors, already engaged in community and youth training, awareness-raising and support for women's groups in the business sector. The added value of WELOD was to involve specialists in the field who successfully completed each of the activities entrusted to them. For example, the university collaborated with the Women Institute centre to implement gender training courses for the benefit of officials and representatives of local institutions, NGOs specialised in business support implemented technical training courses for the benefit of women, associations specialised in human rights and community awareness-raising implemented exchange and discussion workshops for the benefit of young students, while promoting positive communication messages through the use of more gender-sensitive media.

These were quality initiatives, but they did not have the desired effect in terms of achieving the overall objective, as they lacked an interrelation framework and tools to link the different activities, which in fact appeared to be implemented as if they were isolated projects. Synergies were created between courses on gender for the benefit of administrations, held at the university, and those animated through NGOs, such as Chemch on legal aid for victims. Other synergies were created in the context

²⁷ The main idea of Tawasol was born in 2005, under the leadership of Zahira Kamal, a former MoWA minister. The idea started as a pilot project in Bethlehem and Hebron, with the aim of collecting data on women's economic needs, gender-based violence (GBV) and available services.

of the training courses held for the benefit of the Tawasol, to which NGOs such as El MIFTAH also contributed.

5.4 Efficiency

The level of efficiency is still low. Although the programme is implemented by actors who have been collaborating for more than ten years and the partnership is formalised through a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) specifying roles and responsibilities, the coordination mechanism has several shortcomings, such as specific institutional support figures and the use of adequate monitoring.

WELOD3 comprises two components, (1) the first implemented through a budget support mechanism of MoWA and MoSD, with the allocation of funds through the Ministry of Finance, and (2) the second implemented through local funds provided by the Italian Cooperation Agency (AICS) (formerly the Local Technical Unit) in Jerusalem, through contracting with the modalities of the "call for tenders" and direct allocation to specific outreach initiatives, scholarships and training activities, involving Berzeit University.

The articulation of the two components was made possible through the active involvement of local NGOs and associations, which supported Tawasols in organising business training courses for women's *empowerment* and in selecting beneficiaries; they also helped facilitate capacity-building on gender equality issues, targeting governorate staff, members of the police and legal officers. Civil society is also actively engaged in raising awareness on the promotion of women's rights among girls and boys and within the community, and in supporting shelters.

However, a similar dynamic of coordination and synergy was not created between the two partner ministries, which implemented the activities separately, providing little space for sharing, exchange and liaison, particularly between Tawasols and the Centres for Protection Against Violence Against Women. This lack of coordination affected the proper implementation of the overall intervention, presenting contrasting rhythms between the two components and significant delays reported in the progress towards SO1, especially for the activities organised by MoWA, due to its weak operationalisation. MoWA encountered several problems in spending the appropriations allocated through budget support and eventually had to transfer about 30% of the resources that were reallocated to MoSD.

On a more general level, it can be concluded that WELOD endeavoured to allocate financial and human resources strategically. The division of funds into budget support, local funds and expert funds allowed for targeted support to MoWA and MoSD, the employment of experts with specific expertise, and the direct implementation of relevant activities by the AICS. The reallocation of funds between ministries was implemented to resolve budget discrepancies, ensuring efficient use of resources. The establishment of the Steering Committee and adherence to approval processes indicate a systematic and strategic approach to resource management. However, delays in the submission of documentation by ministries and compliance with reporting requirements indicate areas for improvement, especially with regard to monitoring.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE, THROUGH THE PROPER USE OF RESOURCES, BEEN CONSISTENT WITH THE FINANCIAL FORECASTS?

The implementation, supervision and monitoring of the two components of WELOD3 were the responsibility of the two institutional partners MoWA and MoSD and AICS.

The DGCS in Rome, which manages the funding, was particularly involved in the formulation and approval of the action, signing the *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) with the two partner ministries. In addition, two short-term competencies, managed directly by the DGCS, were included to provide technical assistance for the elaboration of two research projects in the West Bank and Gaza.

The coordination of the programme was at AICS level, where sits a gender specialist as well. The supervision of the programme implementation was entrusted to a team leader, and the administrative management to an assistant, who were hired at the beginning of the activities. During the programme

phases, there had been several coordinators (high staff turnover), which resulted in the loss of much of the already scarce information, mostly because of lack of a proper knowledge management and document archiving system. Activities were partially recorded in the operational plans or technical notes submitted to the DGCS. As these documents were produced on the basis of standard templates in accordance with MAECI requirements, they do not contain any reference to progress towards the achievement of results and objectives, nor do they include qualitative analyses of the activities and results achieved or the risks and challenges encountered. In general, the information reported mainly concerns the status of activities, including those related to budget support components, reports on possible delays and, on some rare occasions, describes methods to overcome difficulties or adapt activities.

The second component was implemented locally by AICS through the disbursement of financial resources (funds on the ground) directly to civil society organisations in order to conduct awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives, training for women's *empowerment*, gender *mainstreaming* in university and academic courses, and the funding of research for the establishment of a Tawasol centre in Gaza.

The assignment of short-term experts and the involvement of the Italian NGO Differenza Donna in the development and technical assistance for the establishment of shelters, in particular the Mehwar centre, has indeed contributed to improving knowledge and assessment of the gender-based violence situation and to enhancing the protection services provided to victims and survivors of violence.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women were actively involved in the implementation of the initiatives under the first component, in particular, UNFPA contributed to the organisation of the training courses addressed to MoSD social workers and Tawasol and participated, jointly with UN Women, in supporting MoWA in the establishment of the Observatory on Violence Against Women. The AICS ensured the follow-up and coordination with the UN Agencies, thanks also to the leading role played by the Italian Cooperation within the Technical Working Group on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women of the international organisations working in the West Bank and Gaza.

It is noted that the progress of the intervention shows contrasting rhythms between the two components. In general, the programme, which should have started in 2015, actually started in 2016 and experienced a five-month delay during the initial period, mainly caused by difficulties related to the operationalization of the intervention, particularly of budget support activities. For example, there were delays in submitting all required documentation and meeting the conditions of the MoU for the disbursement of the second and final tranche of budget support, as well as in submitting reports and audit on time. However, despite these difficulties, the necessary documentation was eventually provided and approved, and the funds disbursed.

However, it should be noted that most of the delays have been made up considering the period of slow progress during the pandemic crisis.

Monitoring the progress of the intervention, however, was difficult to define, considering that the initially established work plan was not updated during implementation.

The intervention does not have a governance scheme, so coordination is organised through the single internal governance of the Advisory Committee (AC) whose members are representatives of AICS, including the programme coordinator, the DGCS and representatives of MoWA, MoSD and the Ministry of Finance. The Advisory Committee played a key role as a decision-making body in the management of the programme. Its responsibilities and *modus operandi*, including the frequency of meetings, are described in the Programme Action Document, as follows:

- Supervise the overall execution of the programme.
- Approve procedures and documents relating to the Committee's operations.
- Make strategic decisions on budget allocation between the two programme components. For example, the Committee approved the reallocation of funds between MoWA and MoSD according to their spending capacity.
- Approve the operational programmes (OPs) for the different phases of the programme.
- Approve the narrative and financial reports produced by the different programme components, which are essential for the disbursement of subsequent funding tranches.

The AC met at least six times during the duration of the intervention, successfully approved the operational programmes, facilitated discussions and made decisions on the reallocation of the budget according to the changing needs of the programme.

The AC has proven to be an important mechanism, having issued recommendations to catch up on backlogs and prioritise activities. The mechanism was sensitive to the challenges faced, such as the unequal spending capacity between MoWA and MoSD, and made changes accordingly. It also ensured the timely submission and approval of financial and narrative reports.

The main cases of budget reallocation mentioned in the programme documentation and confirmed during the interviews are two. These are:

- **From MoWA to MoSD:** this reallocation occurred in response to the higher spending capacity of MoSD compared to MoWA. The AC noted that MoSD's budget was being depleted even before it reached 80% of the first tranche's expenditure, making it ineligible to apply for the second tranche. To solve this problem, the AC unanimously approved the reallocation of EUR 320,000 from MoWA budget to MoSD.
- **From the Expert Fund to the In Loco Fund:** On 21 November 2019, a total of EUR 16,684.83 was reallocated from the Expert Fund to the In Loco Fund. This decision was made because the remaining balance of the Expert Fund was deemed more useful to support on-site activities. The amount was used specifically for the salary of a financial expert on line 1.1.1.

These reallocations were made in response to the changing needs of the programme and its components, with the intention of maximising the effectiveness of the funds. A table showing the transfers of funds for each programme component is detailed in the official letter submitted by MoWA to the DGCS and has been duly reported in the OPs.

In 2019, it was decided to further reallocate funds (through non-burdensome changes in the use of funds on the ground) to meet the logistical needs of opening three Tawasol centres in the Gaza Strip, which has a fragile socio-political situation. For the opening of the centres, which were reduced from three to one, a needs mapping exercise was carried out, but unfortunately the construction of the centre was not completed due to the lack of agreements between MoWA and the de facto government of Gaza.

WELOD received a total funding of EUR 3.3 million, divided into three components: ministry budget support, local funds and expert funds.

The budget support component allocated EUR 1.7 million to MoWA (EUR 1.17 million) and MoSD (EUR 530,000). The allocation of funds was based on the capacity and needs of each ministry. The budget support component demonstrates the effort to strategically allocate resources considering the specific needs of the two ministries. Due to some differences in spending capacity between MoSD and MoWA (which showed that MoSD could not reach the spending target of 80% of the first tranche), a decision was made to reallocate EUR 320,000 from MoWA budget to MoSD. This

adjustment demonstrated flexibility and adaptability and indicates a willingness to optimise the allocation of resources according to the needs that emerged on the ground.

By providing dedicated budgets for MoWA and MoSD, the programme ensured that the necessary resources were available for the specific activities of SO1. This approach enabled targeted interventions, capacity building and the establishment of crucial services and institutions, and thus demonstrates that resources were used appropriately and strategically to achieve the programme's intended results.

With the EUR 1.17 million allocated, MoWA implemented several activities to fulfil SO1. The use of the financial resources covered expenses such as staff salaries, training programmes, and *capacity-building* (see the table below for a snapshot of how the resources were divided according to the macro-areas identified by MoWA).

Similarly, MoSD used its budget of 530,000 euro to implement activities related to the fulfilment of MDG 1. These include, among others, the enhancement of anti-violence services and the training of staff in handling cases of gender-based violence.

Ministry	Allocated funds (€)	Activities realised	Activity expenses (€)
Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)	1,170,000	- Development of gender mainstreaming strategies	750,000
		- Capacity-building programmes for MoWA staff	420,000
Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)	530,000	- Strengthening anti-violence services	280,000
		- Staff training on gender-based violence	250,000

The local funds component, amounting to EUR 1,106,684.83 million, was also strategically allocated. The Operational Plan (OP) of the programme for each year was approved by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The budget for local funds was allocated as follows:

Macroarea	Allocated budget (€)	Amount spent (€)
Human Resources	206.886,89	207.000,93
Operating costs	93,655.44	93,600.09
Activities (mostly SO 2-related)	806,142.50	803,517.24
Total expenses	1.106.684,83	1.104.118,27

The remaining balance of EUR 2,566.56 (difference between allocated funds and expenditure) was taken into account according to the fluctuation of the local currency. In the documentation, it is stated that during the implementation of the programme, in particular at the beginning of 2014, the value of the euro decreased by approximately 22% compared to the value of the local currency (ILS or NIS). These currency fluctuations resulted in an exchange loss of EUR 2,361.28, reducing the programme's accounting balance to EUR 205.28 from the initial EUR 2,566.56.

The third budget component of the programme provided for the deployment of experts with relevant qualifications in the field. The Expert Fund, amounting to EUR 510,000, was dedicated to expert missions. However, due to a reallocation decision, the available amount was merged with local funds, increasing the total from EUR 1.09 million to EUR 1.106 million.

The management team was proactive in addressing financial challenges and taking appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of currency fluctuations. Overall, this indicates good utilisation of

resources, as the team actively managed financial risks and ensured adequate financial control and reporting.

In general, the delays and obstacles encountered can be attributed to various difficulties that emerged over time, mainly related to the fragile political environment in Palestine and internal issues within the Palestinian side. The obstacles faced, mentioned in several documents, referred to the decrease in institutional staff dedicated to the programme. Furthermore, the formation of a new Palestinian government of national unity led to organisational changes within the ministries, including the appointment of a new minister for Women's Affairs. In addition, the prolonged absences of the Minister of Labour necessitated further coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to finalise the opening of employment guidance centres. The process of approval of the legislative decree for the institutionalisation of Tawasol centres by the Council of Ministers was also accompanied by bureaucratic delays. Finally, the war in Gaza understandably shifted the priorities of local counterparts, demanding their attention and resources. Despite these challenges, the programme has shown resilience in overcoming these obstacles and continuing with implementation.

Considering the above, it can be concluded that WELOD endeavoured to allocate financial and human resources strategically. The division of funds into budget support, local funds and expert funds allowed for targeted support to MoWA and MoSD, the employment of experts with specific expertise, and the direct implementation of relevant activities by the AICS. The reallocation of funds between ministries was implemented to resolve budget discrepancies, ensuring efficient use of resources. The establishment of the Steering Committee and adherence to approval processes indicate a systematic and strategic approach to resource management. However, delays in the submission of documentation by ministries and compliance with reporting requirements indicate areas for improvement, especially in the area of monitoring.

Basically, in terms of delivery capacity and, in particular, the mapping of the real characteristics of the main actors involved in the intervention (connection to relevance), some problematic aspects should be underlined. For instance, MoWA was not able to spend part of the budget necessary to reach 80% of the resources in order to have access to the last tranche of the budget. As a result, part of the funds had to be allocated to MoSD. Due to the bureaucratic delays in the process (in which MoWA, AICS, MoSD and the Ministry of Finance were involved), this specific aspect generated a major delay in the implementation of the programme (aggravated by the pandemic) and a series of unfavourable events. This specific aspect may have been caused by several factors acting simultaneously: lack of dedicated staff, lack of working capacity, and lack of internal coordination mechanisms to effectively identify needs and manage funds according to agreements.

SINCE EFFICIENCY IS ABOUT CHOOSING BETWEEN VIABLE ALTERNATIVES THAT CAN DELIVER SIMILAR RESULTS WITH THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES, WERE THERE REALLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVES THAT WERE COMPARABLE IN QUALITY AND RESULTS?

AICS Jerusalem has reached an excellent knowledge of the Palestinian partners, thanks also to the experiences of the two previous phases of the programme, which allowed it to establish a solid collaboration with MoSD in particular. However, based on the interviews conducted, a clear point of weakness emerges, which concerns the insufficient operational capacity demonstrated by MoWA in particular. MoWA is an institution that works across the board in collaboration with other ministries and intervenes particularly at the policy level, so it does not have much of a presence at the local level. The implementation of WELOD3 was intended to accompany the strengthening of this ministry's operational capacities at the local level through the formation of Tawasol centres. However, considering the difficulties encountered in the allocation and utilisation of available funds, it is clear that MoWA implementation capacities are still insufficient.

Also in view of previous experience and the shortcomings already encountered, there was no institutional accompanying mechanism or technical assistance competence to support MoWA, thus weakening the entire implementation mechanism.

Considering the above mentioned difficulties of MoWA, there were phases throughout the duration of the intervention when internal coordination was reported to be problematic. In particular, MoWA, as had already happened in the past with MoSD, faced some challenges when the management of the reception facility created with Italian Cooperation funds was transferred from the implementing partners to the Ministry and local authorities.

Efficiency was also hindered by the poor coordination promoted between the two ministries, which, according to the interviews conducted, did not foresee any mechanism of cooperation between them, creating at various times a weak collaboration that negatively affected the entire programme.

On the contrary, a system of good cooperation and frequent communication between the various donors intervening in the sector has been created thanks to the *Gender Technical Working Group*, which is led by AICS and offers a space for discussion and exchange on proposed approaches, ensuring a common understanding of the strategies to be used to improve the quality of the review of actions and the sharing of results and avoid overlapping or duplication of interventions.

A significant shortcoming in programme implementation noted by this final evaluation was the absence of a more structured monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) component. The importance of a robust MEL system for any programme cannot be underestimated, as it serves as a framework for stakeholders to systematically track progress, measure results, and evaluate the effectiveness and learning associated with interventions.

A more detailed logical framework, incorporating gender-sensitive results, could significantly enrich the understanding of the programme's impact on different groups, while also considering the effects produced on the existing gender balance and thus ensuring inclusiveness and effectiveness.

Although the WELOD programme (in all three implemented phases) has commendably started to integrate gender-disaggregated indicators at the activity level (e.g. the number of women participating in events), the scope of monitoring and data collection should also include the number of men who participated in events, beyond simply counting the number of participants. The aim should be to capture and integrate multidimensionality and gender mainstreaming in an objective way, starting from the design and permeating the implementation of the programme and the MEL system.

Despite the well-defined and interconnected focus areas reflected in the programme's objectives, their practical application could have been better supported by monitoring tools incorporating integrated quantitative, qualitative and gender-sensitive indicators. In view of future initiatives, it will be crucial to strengthen MEL approaches and data collection tools to facilitate a more multidimensional analysis during programme implementation.

Furthermore, although some efforts have been made to create spaces for the exchange and sharing of operational information (minutes, notifications and reports from the Ministry, etc.), feedback from the programme evaluation indicates that stakeholders could benefit from more learning opportunities. In particular, for exchanges at the strategic level to increase the effectiveness and learning of processes and models. To address this issue, the WELOD programme should have considered creating more ad hoc spaces for in-depth reflection and sharing of successful practices. An environment where all stakeholders can learn, adapt and improve from their own perspective and expertise.

Without a structured MEL component, it will become difficult to progress towards evidence-based decisions and to fully understand the impact of the programme. This could result in missed

opportunities to optimise strategies to support better management and accountability, and to steadily drive towards more impactful and sustainable outcomes. In fact, the entire intervention does not provide any means to adjust programme implementation or to identify potentially relevant gaps through a mid-term evaluation.

Furthermore, a lack of alignment between the reports produced by each of the implementing partners has been recorded. The reports are presented in different formats according to each partner's criteria and refer to the components under each one's responsibility, so there is no consolidated report and consequently the information appears fragmented. Indeed, the reports are still deficient in providing an overview of the rationale used for the implementation of each component in alignment with results and outcomes, which affects the clarity and completeness of the information provided. As a result, the technical note and reports are neither rich in critical analysis nor complete with information. Interim reports do not provide an accurate view of the programme's achievements against objectives. Furthermore, although risks and challenges were identified from the initial design, they were not thoroughly analysed in the reports, thus not ensuring their validity and not supporting the design of any adjustments that would have been necessary. The failure to include values and targets in the logical framework does not provide relevant data on the progress of implementation or ensure that the assumptions fit the current circumstances of the implementation context.

Finally, there is no archiving system, which did not allow for sufficient capitalisation of the previous phases. However, it should be noted that phase 3 of WELOD was defined as a result of the recommendations provided by the evaluation carried out, which identified the area of women's *empowerment* as a key area on which to channel funding.

5.5 Sustainability

The programme presents different levels of sustainability from socio-cultural to economic and institutional.

In particular:

- Internal coordination mechanisms did not present a high level of sustainability, while the sustainability of coordination with external actors, especially in the areas of institutional commitments, is solid;
- A good level of sustainability is observed with regard to the services offered (through the NRS and governorates), the existence of which has been better disseminated thanks to the activities promoted within the framework of WELOD3;
- A very good result can be reported at the level of services provided by shelters, which continue to support women victims of violence. In particular, the '*Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families*' in Bethlehem;
- the 'National GBV Observatory' lacks institutional sustainability;
- the programme does not provide for any 'exit strategy' to accompany the consolidation of the actions carried out during its implementation.

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE RESULTS OBTAINED THROUGH THE INITIATIVE SUSTAINED AFTER ITS CONCLUSION?

It has to be said that the internal coordination mechanisms promoted within WELOD3 were rather weak and, consequently, could not promote a strong level of sustainability. Indeed, even the end date of the programme is not perceived in the same way by the different partners.

On the other hand, at the level of coordination mechanisms, the *Gender Sector Working Group* (GSWG), established in October 2021 as part of the *Local Aid Coordination Secretariat* (LACS), chaired by MoWA and with Italy as *Deputy Chair*, met during the duration of the programme and still sees very proactive work by Italy as the main gender donor. Italy and the members of the Gender

Technical Working Group have a very proactive attitude and are ready to respond in a coordinated manner to emerging needs.

A good level of sustainability is observed with regard to the services offered (through the NRS and governorates), the existence of which has been better disseminated thanks to the activities promoted within the framework of WELOD3.

An excellent result can be seen in the services provided by the shelters, which continue to support women victims of violence. In particular, the 'Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families' was established in the Bethlehem Governorate, opened in February 2007 as the first anti-violence centre in the Middle East offering integrated services to combat violence against women, while working towards the adoption of international human rights standards and best practices. In August 2006, after an experimental recruitment process, twenty-six staff members were hired with different skills in the fields of social work, social sciences, management, administration, law, education, fitness and security. The number of women accommodated at the Mehwar centre in Bethlehem has fluctuated from 37 to 43 in recent years, as the centre's accommodation capacity is limited. It is difficult to analyse whether the increase in services is due to an increase in domestic violence or to an improvement in the reporting of domestic violence. However, based on the evaluation analysis, the institutional and economic sustainability of Mehwar is sufficiently evident. In contrast, the socio-cultural sustainability of shelters, which are still considered as a last resort in case of violence, is rather low.

Concerning the 'National GBV Observatory', the data show that at the time of the evaluation, the National Observatory was not yet functional, mainly due to the institutional coordination and sharing of the necessary data between the various ministries. In 2022, the Ministry of Women's Affairs took two measures to improve the functionality of the National Observatory: 1) a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Health Public Institute, which developed the software and further enriched it, and 2) eleven (11) data entry staff were hired in all governorates to amplify data entry and lighten the workload of some institutions. The evaluation team identified a lack of real collaboration between MoWA and MoSD in this regard, characterised by 'siloed' action, with the two institutions operating separately.

In the absence of an accompanying plan at programme closure, the overall level of sustainability of the actions implemented is rather poor and almost entirely linked to individual programme components, whether or not they are 'supported' by the context in which they operate.

HOW HAS THE INTERVENTION ENSURED THE STRENGTHENING OF SYSTEMS, INSTITUTIONS OR CAPACITIES TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION?

WELOD3, through the implementation of its activities, allowed the network of CSOs to truly show their potential capacity to understand and support real needs in the area of gender. Within the framework of WELOD3, civil society organisations (CSOs) had the opportunity to strongly advocate for the reform of outdated and discriminatory laws in the areas of criminal law and personal status, labour law and local elections, as well as the adoption of anti-violence and family protection laws.

The programme is aligned with the national development plan and the priorities set for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Sustainable development is a national competence and can be implemented jointly with national, local and international partners. The alignment of the programme with national priorities and the emphasis on national capacity building contribute to the sustainability of the results within the scope of the results.

5.6 Impact

Given the premise presented in section 4.1.1 of this document, it is necessary to state that, rather than on "established" impacts, the evaluation focused on change processes and emerging short-term "impact drivers" or, rather, on "impact trend lines".

The effects produced by the implementation of the programme can be considered as a mix of positive and negative effects, which can only be correctly understood by considering the contextualisation of the Palestine 'case', where the Israeli occupation constitutes a constant 'unknown' in terms of effects.

Nevertheless, the resilient spirit and numerous interconnections between the various actors of transformative change have produced innovative and unexpected (not always positive, however) effects.

WHAT EFFECTS - POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, EXPECTED AND UNEXPECTED - HAS THE INTERVENTION HAD ON THE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS, ON THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ON POLICIES AND ACTIONS TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

On the basis of the interviews and evidence from the field, MoWA has engaged in significant *advocacy in* support of the adoption of the Family Law, which provides for a number of reforms to improve women's living and working conditions (including rules on inheritance, maternity care, etc.). The process, however, is still ongoing and will take a long time to reach the final goal.

At the level of expected effects at institutional level, there is a stronger commitment to mainstream gender in all actions, but no implementation plans for national development policies (only symbolic commitment). Furthermore, despite the attempt to define and standardise concepts and definitions related to gender equality, women's empowerment and *mainstreaming*, no major changes can be registered.

Despite ongoing efforts to promote a participatory and proactive approach, the current policy approach to gender policy development, including cross-sectoral planning, still seems very much 'top-down' rather than 'bottom-up' (and as such has a number of inherent limitations as an approach).

The level of participation found in the evaluation exercise varies between the target groups. In general, WELOD3 maintains good relations with both institutional partners, but the implementation of the programme shows that MoSD is the most involved and proactive. The strong relationship established by the intervention with this institution translates into significant levels of participation. Despite the political instability of the OPTS, the shelters for victims of violence established under WELOD 1 and 2 have been well established and are successfully managed by MoSD. At the local level, the services provided by these houses are essential to protect women and their children and help improve the response to GBV cases by local authorities. On the other hand, based on the evaluation results, it appears that Tawasols have not achieved the same results.

The unexpected negative effects observed are often generated by the particular situation in the OPTS, where a large number of international partners such as UNRWA, UN Women, UNFPA, bilateral cooperation actors, and NGOs providing humanitarian aid (particularly to victims and survivors), work in the areas of gender-based violence and GBV by funding different interventions. The Palestinian Authority and its ministries are inevitably influenced by this targeting of funds, which although decided on the basis of priorities set by the national government, also includes areas of donor interest. This can fuel a certain disengagement on the part of the institutions, with respect to an ongoing intervention, because their interest is more oriented towards other new lines of funding.

A further negative effect noted stems from the initial disagreement between AICS and the IWS on two important aspects of the study carried out under Activity 2.6, that of the geographical area to be covered and that of the analysis of the causes of violence. In fact, the IWS would have preferred to include the entire occupied Palestinian territory in the study and not limit it to the West Bank, while

AICS preferred to opt for covering only the West Bank, also to avoid consequent political repercussions. A second discussion concerned the importance of including among the causes of the escalation of violence the one generated by the pressure of the Israeli occupation and the daily acts of violence that the Palestinian people suffer, for example when passing checkpoints or moving around. The terms defined in this way in the study influence and limit the analysis both geographically and anthropologically, as they do not include important determinants of violence and could therefore generate biases should one decide to use the data presented to formulate new interventions for GBV prevention and women's *empowerment*.

Another unexpected negative effect emerged during the implementation of some activities in Qalqilia of SHASHAT's '*What's Tomorrow*' project, which aimed to promote gender equality among adolescents. The project used cinema as a powerful tool for social change. It focused on capacity building of adolescent boys and girls through media training, with a specific emphasis on addressing the needs and concerns of the target group through filmmaking. One of the main issues that affected both boys and girls in Qalqilia was cyber harassment, which became a focus of the project. Teenagers were trained to create awareness-raising videos addressing this issue, resulting in innovative and impactful productions. These videos received positive feedback from parents and members of the local community. Unfortunately, conservative groups in society opposed the videos and mobilised religious leaders to discredit these efforts. To protect the well-being of the teenagers involved, it was decided to remove the videos from social media platforms.

Tawasol

Although WELOD3 has devoted much of its attention to strengthening Tawasols, the internal balance of power and influence exercised by other stakeholders in the governorates and central institutions has led to the unexpected result that the effectiveness of Tawasols depends on the capacity and commitment of the individuals assigned to that function. As a result, Tawasols are virtually inconsistent in the quality of services provided.

Tawasols were created to link and facilitate access to the labour market and to accompany vulnerable women, particularly those who are survivors of violence and discrimination, in the process of qualifying and finding work in order to achieve self-sufficiency. However, few women have benefited from *re-empowerment* opportunities, supporting their entrepreneurship and access to the market.

The Tawasol was created as a technical operational unit of MoWA, thanks to the support of the Italian Cooperation. This allowed the Tawasol to become part of MoWA's decentralised presence within the governorates.

In reality, Tawasols have a very difficult 'life' because:

- ✓ are only desks (not centres);
- ✓ the responsible person (1) is one of the governorate employees (sometimes from the legal advice, sometimes from the gender unit, in any case they are part of the governorate with another specific task);
- ✓ the role of Tawasols is often confused by beneficiaries, women victims of violence or survivors of violence, who turn to Tawasols, instead of the social workers in charge of GBV, also to report cases of violence. As a result, there have been cases of overlapping roles, lack of coordination within local institutions and, above all, inadequate management of GBV issues, considering that the Tawasol leaders do not have adequate specific skills to follow the health and psychological care processes of victims or survivors;
- ✓ The training activities organised by Tawasols strengthened the business and entrepreneurial skills of at least 275 women in business management, marketing, food processing and textile design, among other areas, 50% of whom succeeded in setting up their own businesses.

However, based on the evidence gathered, it is important to note that Tawasol's economic empowerment efforts have mainly focused on training sessions, without providing support for women to set up their own businesses or access basic financing. As a result, women remained economically dependent on their male relatives;

- ✓ Only a few were selected from the most vulnerable groups of women. The target selection made by the NGOs, the women who benefited from these trainings and promoted their activities, are generally groups of women already participating in civil society initiatives. Not reached were very marginalised women, victims or survivors of violence, most of whom reside in rural areas and/or area C, where local authorities cannot easily access them. All interviewed beneficiaries are from semi-urban and urban areas, and only a few of them are selected among women victims or survivors of violence;
- ✓ The evaluation team recognises the importance of Tawasols as a decentralised presence of MoWA within the governorates, however, there is a clear need to redefine their role and functions. Moreover, the fact that the same person in charge of the Tawasol holds another position within the governorate already identifies the role of the Tawasol as secondary.

The National Observatory

The National Observatory on Gender-based Violence was conceived as a national platform to centralise the coordination and monitoring of protection services for victims of gender-based violence. MoWA strongly encouraged the creation of the Observatory in order to channel and consolidate all data into one common system to have up-to-date data to track trends in gender-based violence. In recent years, the poor liaison and coordination created between MoWA and MoSD, the ministry that manages sensitive data of victims of violence, has led to a certain disengagement in feeding the platform by both institutions and UNFPA and UN Women, which, by the way, already have their own data collection and systematisation tools. As a result, the platform has recently only been used by MoWA, in fact, according to the interviews, even at the level of the institutions involved, the platform is not fully functional.

MoWA

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is still crossing an unstable bridge. There are several issues to be addressed and possibly corrected based on the analysis promoted through the evaluation exercise. These include:

- MoWA is not fully accepted as part of the institutional organisation of PAS. For this reason, several ministries and institutions in general tend to be critical of it and do not facilitate its functioning;
- Based on the results of the evaluation exercise, it appears that MoWA is understaffed and that the current staff does not have all the necessary skills, despite the numerous training courses attended in various subjects (especially related to gender mainstreaming and gender issues). Most probably, this is also due to the lack of easy-to-implement procedures and regulations;
- Although on paper MoWA's mandate is quite clear, there seems to be a clear disagreement on its role among the main actors and institutions. Indeed, although it is acknowledged by all key actors that its 'natural position' is policy-making and monitoring and evaluation in the field of gender and related issues (with a specific technical added value), there are still overlaps in implementation activities;
- Despite the commitment shown by the various actors involved in the intervention in supporting the liberation of women victims or survivors of violence, the results found on women's *empowerment* are unsatisfactory. The causes are mainly related to two weaknesses found within MoWA, its limited local operations and the consequent lack of capacity of this

ministry and of the implemented actions to align with existing GBV prevention and protection strategies, and the lack of learning *by doing* activities.

Awareness-raising

Positive effects can be seen thanks to the awareness-raising activities promoted within the framework of WELOD3 and aimed at young people, who show enthusiasm and interest and increase their attention to violence and abuse, as well as to an understanding of the roles that society and traditional practices assign to men and women. Thanks to the active CSO network, raising awareness, especially of the younger generation, seems to be possible and of great impact, despite the absence of a strategic communication plan, which would have contributed to a greater impact.

MoSD

The Ministry has shown in the programme that it has the right capacity to allocate and use its core functions. Reporting is well established and, despite the great difficulties faced by all PA institutions (e.g. all PA employees receive only 30% of their salary), the staff is very proactive, motivated and professional. Shelter management is not an easy task, especially due to the limited resources available (e.g. psychological support for shelter staff). However, compared to a few years ago, the activities of the shelters are well carried out.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE EXPECTED RESULTS BEEN ACHIEVED?

None of the three expected results were fully achieved, although progress was made in achieving Specific Objective 2.

In relation to S.O.1

The specific objectives of WELOD3 include developing the government's commitment to mainstream gender equality and the prevention of violence against women into policies, budgets and strategic plans, involving various ministries and relevant legislation. In particular, WELOD3, by addressing the strengthening and operationalisation of MoWA, aims to promote influence on policies and legislation, to network with women's organisations, governmental bodies and civil society organisations at regional and international levels, and to exchange experiences in the implementation of international agreements on women and human rights.

Achieving this required a certain level of capacity and understanding of the socio-political context to contribute to the development of these policies and strategies, as well as to influence policy and decision-making processes within the Palestinian government. This required qualified and professional specialists in gender equality, women, girls and human rights, as well as investment in the development of existing staff through *capacity-building* initiatives and the promotion of women in leadership positions within the ministry.

However, despite the efforts made, very little has been achieved in terms of institutional strengthening. Currently, top positions within the Ministry are predominantly occupied by men. The Ministry employs several men in key positions, including the former deputy minister, the minister's advisor for programmes and international relations, and the director general for planning and policy. It has not been demonstrated whether the criteria for recruitment and promotion include considerations of gender equality beliefs, understanding of women's rights, ability to develop and influence policies, and skills to apply international conventions in Palestinian policies and legislation to mainstream gender issues in the different ministries.

Moreover, MoWA lacks the budget and capacity to develop *capacity-building* sessions on gender mainstreaming for various ministries and government employees. There is no indication of an action

plan in line with its strategic objectives. According to its mandate, MoWA should be responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming in the various ministries. However, the budget allocated under WELOD3 could not be used effectively by MoWA to improve the capacities of the different ministries or to mainstream gender issues within them. As a result, the Ministry has not been able to make full use of the multi-year funding provided by the programme to promote gender mainstreaming within the various ministries.

Furthermore, despite MoWA and MoSD's efforts in influencing institutional policies and plans at the central level, services and tools at the local level to include gender equality approaches within spatial planning and the response provided by the governorates, *advocacy* work with governments has not produced the expected effects, particularly on the ratification of CEDAW by PA representatives.

Based on the interviews and evidence gathered, the intervention did not produce significant effects on the enhancement of governorships and the promotion of the participation of civil society, Tawasol, and social workers in local decision-making processes to invest in the legislative revision of policies with a gender perspective.

The effects produced on MoSD are certainly more evident, considering the longevity of this ministry, its high level of effectiveness, and the previous experiences with the Italian Cooperation in protecting victims and survivors of violence, through the creation of centres such as the Mehwar and Zohra Centres. MoSD not only benefited from gender mainstreaming training, which updated the skills of social workers, but also financed a series of trainings for the benefit of women victims of violence who are guests or beneficiaries of Mehwar's services.

An additional benefit was produced by the training conducted in cooperation with the Institute of Women's Studies and Birzeit University, which resulted in strengthening the knowledge of social workers and other actors working in the field of violence against women, such as police personnel, psychologists, legal advisors, on the effects and trauma generated by acts of violence. In addition, the training courses also included an assessment of the necessary skills, such as those related to communication and *networking*. Considering the statements from the interviews, however, it should be noted that in order to have a real impact on the daily work of the participants, the courses need to be institutionalised and integrated into a clear capacity-building plan drawn up by the relevant ministries.

In relation to S.O.2

Although the role of Tawasols was reviewed as part of the coordination and operational strategy developed during the programme implementation (including a *road-map* and identification of Tawasols' training needs), in practice the evaluation could not record any evidence of increased effectiveness of Tawasols in the field of women's empowerment. In fact, Tawasols interviewed stated that no action had been taken as a result of the identified strategy.

Tawasols were created to link and facilitate access to the labour market and to accompany vulnerable women, particularly those who are survivors of violence and discrimination, in the process of qualifying and finding a job in order to achieve self-sufficiency. However, according to the interviews conducted, very few women benefited from *re-empowerment* opportunities, supporting their entrepreneurship and access to the market. Only those women interviewed who already have a business in the West Bank have strengthened their management and marketing skills, their knowledge of competition and marketing restrictions related to the particular administrative situation in the occupied territories.

In fact, the role of Tawasols was often confused by the beneficiaries, women victims of violence or survivors of violence, who referred to them, instead of the social workers in charge of GBV, to

report/report cases of violence. As a result, there were cases of overlapping roles, lack of coordination within the local institutions and, above all, inadequate management of GBV issues, considering that the Tawasol leaders do not have specific competences adequate to follow the health and psychological care processes of victims or survivors.

The training activities organised by Tawasols strengthened the business and entrepreneurial skills of at least 275 women in business management, marketing, food processing and textile design, among other areas, of whom 50 per cent were able to set up their own businesses (among the beneficiary respondents, of the six women who participated in the economic empowerment training in Tulkarim, four were able to set up their own businesses and two were employed).

In addition to training on economic *empowerment*, the women also participated in sessions on women's rights, gender-based violence, referral mechanisms for GBV victims and general professional skills (e.g. managing a small budget). These training sessions contributed significantly to raising the women's self-esteem and improving their understanding of the role of Tawasol Centres and other institutions providing services to victims of GBV. In addition, the programme organised a learning trip to Italy, where the participating women had the opportunity to learn about the mechanisms of service provision and protection for women victims of GBV.

The beneficiary women are members of the target communities, so in an indirect way this capacity-building helped to raise awareness of the importance of enabling women and girls to contribute in a concrete way to the economic development of the community. This awareness-raising was then complemented by the action of NGOs financed through local WELOD funds, which, for their part, carried out various activities to stimulate social transformation in order to promote substantial changes in existing patriarchal and macho attitudes and behaviour.

However, based on the evidence gathered, it is important to note that economic empowerment efforts by Tawasols have mainly focused on training sessions, without providing support to women in setting up their own businesses or accessing basic financing. Moreover, it should be emphasised that people are thus used to attending training courses altogether without any yardstick for evaluating the impact, driven more by the need to be away from their office than by the need to actually learn and progress in the curriculum. This phenomenon, which creates a kind of 'training fatigue', is quite common in Palestine and has been recorded through interviews at other donor levels as well.

As a result, women remained economically dependent on their male relatives. Despite the value of raising awareness about GBV referral mechanisms and services available, the women FGD participants emphasised that economic independence increases women's self-sufficiency and enables them to break out of the vicious cycle of violence.

The selection of participating women did not take into account the different skills of the beneficiaries. The training courses were not designed on the basis of an adequate skills needs assessment, which should have been carried out at the beginning of the intervention.

The study conducted in cooperation with the IWS was also not taken into account. This study, the result of an intensive collaboration between the AICS office in Jerusalem and Birzeit University, reports significant information and data defining the needs of women and girls who are victims or survivors of violence. The study identifies and conceptualises the reintegration processes of women survivors of gender-based violence in Palestinian society, focusing on women's own perceptions, narratives and experiences, and defining a set of intervention recommendations focused on promoting radical changes within the political, economic, social and cultural environment that fosters violence in all its forms, including gender-based violence. The study elaborates a detailed analysis of the state of the reintegration process, based on data and information collected also through interviews conducted with women hosted in shelters and with MoSD staff members and social workers.

Cooperation with Berzeit University made it possible to organise a training course on gender equality, with an attempt to formalise the course within the academic curricula. However, this did not happen due to a lack of financial resources to implement a longer course. Furthermore, according to the interviews, the collaboration between the university and AICS suffered from the lack of a common vision on investigating gender-based violence.

The intervention envisaged the establishment of a Tawasol centre in Gaza as well, which was considered crucial in view of the extreme vulnerability of the area's female population exposed to the spread of gender-based violence, which becomes even more problematic due to the absence of care services and the few health facilities. However, despite the fact that an in-depth skill needs assessment was successfully carried out by the Women's Technical Forum, the lack of a clear agreement between MoWA as the Ministry of the Palestinian Authority and the de facto government of Gaza, due to political issues, prevented the establishment of the centre. At the time of the evaluation, the study was not available, being dated 2015 and not having prepared a digital and hard copy.

In this sense, *advocacy* and influence initiatives promoted the integration of gender equality issues in education (with the Ministry of Education) and the focus on the importance of women's access to land (with the Ministry of Urban Planning).

The most significant result was the scholarships granted to 6 young women from different governorates, victims of domestic and external violence, stigmatised by society and with little opportunity to find decent, adequately paid work. These young women have a good basic education but, either because of the violence they have suffered or because of societal obstructionism, they do not have the opportunity to specialise or find a job. Thanks to the scholarships, 5 of the 6 young women (three of them with children) have been able to finish university and are already trying to start their own business, managing to improve their self-esteem and desire to rebuild their independent lives.

While WELOD3 support came to an end, MoSD continued to provide assistance to these women. During the FGD, women who benefited from the fellowship programmes emphasised how these had had a positive impact on their self-confidence and *empowerment*. One participant recounted her personal experience as a victim of GBV, which had caused her introversion and depression in the past. However, the opportunity to return to university and continue her studies played a transformative role, strengthening her self-confidence and empowering her. Through this programme, some women were able to harness their talents and start small businesses, such as cooking or baking, using social media platforms, especially Facebook, to promote their products.

Despite being enrolled in university and holding an academic certificate, the women interviewed reported that they face a number of challenges. They stated that, as victims of GBV, they experience social marginalisation and have difficulty finding employment. Given the social marginalisation these women face, it is crucial to provide them with support in finding a job after graduation.

Hosted in the shelter, these women received psychosocial sessions to help them overcome the impact of violence on their lives. However, the programmes did not include training or awareness-raising sessions for GBV victims on gender issues, women's rights or access to protection services.

Further positive effects can be seen in the awareness-raising activities aimed at young people, who show enthusiasm and interest and increase their attention to violence and abuse, as well as their understanding of the roles that society and traditional practices assign to men and women.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE PROGRAMME HELPED TO IDENTIFY INNOVATIVE MODES OF INTERVENTION?

Overall, WELOD has not directly contributed to the reduction of violence against women, despite numerous efforts to improve the services provided to victims or survivors of violence through the

strengthening of the role of Tawasols within the Governorate and the case management process, as well as through the establishment and support of shelters.

The impact on strengthening the role of MoWA within the institutional scheme seems insufficient, considering that this Ministry does not have the appropriate capacities to influence policy-making. Its role itself remains insignificant in the *policy making* scenario. Very few initiatives are undertaken with the involvement of other sectoral ministries, although capacity building of senior officials is essential to ensure gender mainstreaming in policy and legislation, as well as to raise awareness of gender equality and women's rights. This lack has prevented the promotion of positive masculinity within the Palestinian government, particularly among senior officials, who serve as role models to inspire other employees.

The main achievement can be identified with the increase in protection services, thanks to the centres in Mehwar and before that in Zohra. Indeed, the process carried out with MoSD, from the establishment of the centre with the support of UN Women, AICS and Differenza Donna to the transfer of management and coordination to MoSD, has strengthened the capacity of MoSD staff and made it possible to take ownership of this important achievement. The centres were then included in the system, in line with the revision of the National Referral System, while raising awareness on the importance of responding to the protection needs of victims of violence.

What has been missing in the approach used is the articulation of the effects produced by protection with those related to the need for rehabilitation of women victims and survivors of violence.

The training activities conducted through Tawasols are not linked to those promoted in the centres, also due to the operational distance of MoWA from MoSD and the lack of coordination and interaction between the two. This deficiency is also compounded by MoWA's lack of influence in the scenario of political decisions, which has obviously not allowed progress on a greater consideration of women's rights, on the recognition of their crucial role in the socio-economic development of the community, and thus on the fundamental importance of directing actions in favour of a consistent reduction of the discrimination to which women and girls are subjected on a daily basis.

It is also observed that the skills development actions only produced important benefits for women who already had some work experience, but very weak effects on most of the trained women who lack the funds and additional professional and technical skills to be able to start a small business. No specific data are available on the percentage of women victims and survivors of violence who were able to find employment or start a business. Consequently, there is little evidence of an impact on the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the women targeted by the programme.

Therefore, the creation of Tawasols has failed to create opportunities for the rehabilitation and reintegration of women, which is crucial for women and girls who have been marginalised or even excluded from their communities and societies because they have denounced the violence they have suffered and thus 'dishonoured' their families.

WELOD3's contribution to raising the level of community awareness in respecting and promoting women's rights is insufficient, as a result neither the community nor the institutions are yet able to show an adequate interest in the elimination of all forms of discrimination, despite the fact that the community and the local authorities have committed themselves to providing a safer space for women and girls. WELOD3 has not yet worked as expected in promoting the achievement of equality within society. In fact, in order to effectively prevent gender-based violence, more action should have been taken to achieve gender balance by ensuring more equal access to basic services, resources and opportunities.

In societies with deeply rooted traditions and gender roles, such as Palestine, the differentiated impact of activities on men, women, boys and girls is of utmost importance. However, very little intervention has involved men in the conduct of activities, with the exception of governorate and police officers in a few training courses, without embracing a more comprehensive intervention. For instance, WELOD did not address the implementation of the National Referral System (NRS), taking the opportunity of the conducted review to clarify roles and responsibilities among the different entities involved in the protection of women victims of GBV and thus to establish binding rules for all service providers, with a focus on facilitating their reintegration into society.

MoWA-led review of the NRS went through several stages and consultations among all governmental and non-governmental institutions that resulted in the amendment of the National Referral System, which was adopted by the Palestinian Cabinet on 28 March 2023²⁸ and published in the Official Gazette. However, the approved amendments failed to address the shortcomings that existed in the previous system, which was implemented in 2013. For example, the system still excludes certain categories of women victims of GBV, including women with disabilities, women involved in prostitution, and women with mental health and addiction issues, from accessing protection shelters and specialised support services. As a result, these marginalised women face considerable difficulties in obtaining the protection and support they need when facing violence or life-threatening situations.

WELOD3 did not take these needs into consideration nor did it accompany MoWA in addressing these shortcomings, consequently it did not contribute to creating a solid institutional mechanism for a comprehensive approach that prioritises the rights and welfare of all women affected by GBV.

However, WELOD3 has produced positive effects in promoting social transformation, involving NGOs such as REFORM and Shashat that work specifically on building the capacities of girls and boys to change. Most of the adolescents involved in the social media workshops and trainings to promote social change have learnt to recognise violence and inequality, gaining a better understanding of the behaviours that lead to mistreatment, abuse and humiliation of people's dignity. However, their ability to act requires more support from local authorities, schools and administrations, which is still insufficient considering the social obstacles and the recent ban decided by the Ministry of Education on awareness-raising campaigns promoted by external associations in high schools.

5.7 Communication and visibility

With regard to communication, WELOD3 did not include a relevant and coherent communication and visibility (C&V) plan. The intervention includes a very important awareness-raising component, so the development of an ad hoc communication strategy would have been more than relevant.

As for visibility, it was adequately promoted at all levels of activity. The Italian Cooperation logo and mentions of MAECI funding are present on all visibility products, banners, and gadgets distributed at all public events.

TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE INITIATIVE ACCOMPANIED BY A FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION ACTION TO PROMOTE THE VERY AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE VISIBILITY OF ITALIAN COOPERATION?

WELOD3 did not include a relevant and coherent communication and visibility (C&V) plan in relation to the logical framework, nor a communication strategy, including the methodology for implementing the plan.

The intervention has a very important awareness-raising component, so the development of an ad hoc communication strategy would have been more than relevant, involving close collaboration with the

²⁸ <https://maqam.najah.edu/legislation/1469/>

media and press, especially at the local level, in order to amplify the effects at the social and community level.

Furthermore, communication was characterised by a lack of synergy between all actors involved, particularly between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development and the Tawasol Coordinators. Knowledge and information sharing was not ensured by either AICS or the partner ministries.

It was noted, however, that visibility was adequately promoted at all levels of activity. The Italian Cooperation logo, the mention of MAECI funding are present on all visibility products. Banners, gadgets distributed during all public events. In addition, the activities carried out by NGOs and academic institutions had the AICS logos fully visible.

Key messages were defined and used across the board in all public events and awareness-raising workshops and activities. Media workshops targeting boys and girls were conducted, such as the initiatives undertaken by Shashat and REFORM. These activities made it possible to reach a broad young audience and to properly disseminate positive messages about gender, promote social transformation and information about existing services that assist victims of violence.

However, there was a lack of visibility at the level of the final beneficiaries interviewed, particularly survivors of gender-based violence, who are mostly managed by the gender unit coordinator and not by the Tawasol.

Under the awareness-raising component, it should be emphasised that quality products were provided and that awareness-raising was effective. Events included training for coordinators, exhibitions for women and participation in national events, such as International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activities Against Sexual Violence.

The '16-day global campaign' to combat gender-based violence (25 November to 10 December) was launched through the Radio Nisaa network and included five radio spots on combating gender-based violence. It was broadcast five times a day for three months. For three months (November 2017 to January 2018), a weekly radio programme was broadcast on the topics of gender-based violence: how to recognise it, how to fight it and how to combat social taboos. Radio Nisaa is the only Palestinian radio station and the first in the Middle East dedicated exclusively to women's issues. It has an audience of about 300,000 people and covers all the governorates of the West Bank and the north of the Gaza Strip.

In addition, a Media Network strategy was drawn up as a long-term cultural commitment to eliminate discrimination against women.

6. Conclusions, lessons learned and good practices

6.1 Conclusions

The 2022 Common Analysis of Countries (CCA) identifies the Israeli occupation, along with recurring conflicts, internal Palestinian political division and the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis, as the main obstacle to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Besides being an obstacle to peace, these barriers translate into significant challenges to good governance, the enjoyment of human rights and gender equality, economic growth, fiscal stability and human development.

The conclusions of WELOD3 evaluation exercise cannot fail to take into account the difficult and complex situation in Palestine; the daily obstacles to achieving small progress and the great efforts to maintain a daily life.

1. Relevance

WELOD3 is articulated with other actions financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Palestine and benefits from previous experiences carried out by the Italian Cooperation (AICS) (formerly the Local Technical Unit) in Jerusalem in Palestine, specifically dedicated to enhancing the social services of MoSD responsible for accompanying and protecting women, or to collaborating with local NGOs to provide legal assistance to victims of violence. In addition, the programme incorporates a skills development approach targeting young women who were forced to drop out of school due to the violence they suffered, considering vocational training and skills enhancement a vector for economic, social and human development. However, the evaluation team found that the relevance of the proposed action was not supported by a real understanding of the environment, its potential and weaknesses. It seems that WELOD3 was conceived more as a mere continuation of WELOD1 and 2 than as an intervention to achieve relevant objectives. The main areas of weakness in the design of the logical framework are: (i) the absence of clear outputs and results and the near absence of detailed outputs, making them almost useless for the results reporting exercise and of little use for project management; (ii) unclear and poorly formulated indicators, referring mainly to activities; and (iii) objectives that are sometimes incorrectly defined and, in the case of capacity building, not detailed.

The needs assessment to be conducted during the initial phase, the use of the collected data as baseline values, and the definition of target values, should have been included in the logical framework. In addition, an appropriate M&E system should have been required to process the collected data, enabling the analysis of progress and monitoring of the achievement of results. The system would have enabled the assessment of differences in accessing opportunities provided by the programme, according to the type of vulnerability and changes in the organisational culture of the partners and NGOs/OSCs involved, with a specific focus on gender impacts in the workplace. Data collection had to be designed to accurately capture these gender-sensitive indicators and be closely monitored for each programme partner, including ministries.

2. Coherence

The programme has a high degree of internal and external coherence at the level of all partners involved. Internal coherence concerns the synergies and interdependencies between interventions of the same institution/administration, as well as the coherence between the intervention and the relevant international standards and criteria to which the institution/administration adheres. From the point of view of internal coherence, the programme fully respects the Italian Cooperation guidelines and the adopted international standards and criteria on women's rights and gender issues. MoWA and MoSD, as partners in the programme, also have good levels of internal coherence. External coherence concerns the consistency between the intervention under consideration and those implemented by other actors in the same context; external coherence includes complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with other actors and verifies that the intervention adds value by avoiding overlaps with other actions. WELOD3 is in line and complementary with the main initiatives in the same fields of intervention.

3. Effectiveness

WELOD3 does not present a solid evidence-based effectiveness. However, the following positive effects were produced: under the first intervention component, aimed at (1) enhancing the capacities of MoWA and MoSD in supporting gender equality and addressing GBV and women's

empowerment, progress was observed in the improvement of protection services, offered by shelters, in particular the study opportunities offered through scholarships awarded to victims and young survivors of violence, which currently represent the most effectively implemented activities. Other important results were achieved under the second component, aimed at (2) improving the awareness of women's and young girls' rights, prevention and anti-violence initiatives through the involvement of NGOs, in particular in the implementation of a comprehensive awareness-raising action, which involved boys and girls and reached the community at different levels, enabling the dissemination of key messages to produce transformation and change in the social fabric.

4. Efficiency

Efficiency was compromised by the lack of a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure efficient *follow-up of* expenditure and implementation of activities. Moreover, the lack of proper systematisation of the documents and information produced during the programme's lifecycle did not allow for the necessary corrections to be made to the implementation mechanism, thus widening the gap that already existed between the two different modes of intervention and thus between the results produced by the two programme components. Furthermore, the delays experienced in the implementation of the activities under MoWA's responsibility slowed down the overall progress of the realisation of results and thus the achievement of objectives. The low operational capacity observed within MoWA and the lack of technical tools created discrepancies that led to progress being recorded on two unrelated levels, that of ministerial budget support and that of local funds managed by the AICS. This situation particularly affected the traceability of results and did not allow for the development of a governance scheme to serve implementation, in addition to the serious delays in *capacity building* activities in Components 1 and 2. Capacity building was developed in a confused manner without a clear *modus operandi* and related capacity building was not completed. Institutional capacities to improve the socio-economic *empowerment* of women have not yet been developed. Budget expenditure has been delayed due to implementation problems and inadequate reporting. In particular, MoWA failed to spend a portion of the budget necessary to reach 80% of the expenditure to access the last tranche of the budget. Therefore, part of the funds (EUR 320,000) had to be allocated to MoSD.

5. Sustainability

The programme has different levels of sustainability from socio-cultural to economic and institutional. In general, it can be said that the overall sustainability of the programme is low:

- The internal coordination mechanisms did not show a high level of sustainability, while the sustainability of coordination with external actors, especially in the areas of institutional commitments, is solid;
- A good level of sustainability is observed with regard to the services offered thanks to the activities promoted within WELOD3;
- Shelter homes continue to support women victims of violence. In particular, the '*Mehwar Centre for the protection and empowerment of women and families*' in Bethlehem;
- the '*National GBV Observatory*' is not yet fully functional as there is little institutional sustainability;
- the programme does not provide any '*exit strategy*' to accompany the consolidation of the actions implemented.

6. Impact

The evaluation focused on change processes and emerging 'impact elements' in the short term or, rather, 'impact trend lines'.

The effects produced by the implementation of the programme can be seen as a mix of positive and negative effects, which can only be correctly understood by considering the contextualisation of the Palestine 'case', where the Israeli occupation constitutes a constant 'unknown' in terms of effects.

Here are some of the conclusions identified:

- Despite the efforts made, very little has been achieved in terms of institutional strengthening;
- Coordination between stakeholders within the European programming context in which Italy *acts as lead agency* has produced and continues to produce good results;
- Although WELOD3 has devoted much of its attention to strengthening Tawasols, the internal balance of power and influence exerted by other stakeholders in the governorates and central institutions has led to the unexpected result that the effectiveness of Tawasols depends on the capacity and commitment of the individuals assigned to that function. As a result, Tawasols are virtually inconsistent in the quality of services provided.

WELOD3 was not able to reach very marginalised women, victims or survivors of violence, most of whom reside in rural areas and/or area C, where local authorities cannot easily access them. All beneficiaries interviewed are from semi-urban and urban areas, and only a few of them were selected among women victims or survivors of violence.

7.Communication and Visibility

WELOD3 did not include a relevant and coherent communication and visibility (C&V) plan. The intervention has a very important awareness-raising component, so the development of an ad hoc communication strategy would have been more than relevant. As for visibility, it was adequately promoted at all levels of activity.

6.2 Good practices and lessons learnt

6.2.1 Good Practices

After reviewing documents and conducting meetings with programme stakeholders, the team identified some good practices that led to success. These practices can be replicated for other similar programmes.

The following good practices have been identified:

- The implementation of the **scholarship programme** has proven to be an effective practice to support women victims of GBV, enabling them to become self-sufficient and reintegrate into society. The scholarship programme has specifically supported these women in enrolling in university and continuing their studies, resulting in them gaining self-confidence and developing a vision for a better future after obtaining their academic degrees.
- **MoSD** has demonstrated in the programme that it has the right capacity to utilise its core functions. Reporting is well established and, despite the great difficulties faced by all PA institutions (e.g. all PA employees receive only 30% of their salary), the staff is very proactive, motivated and professional. Shelter management is not an easy task, especially due to the limited resources available (e.g. psychological support for shelter staff). However, compared to a few years ago, the activities of the shelters are well carried out.

6.2.2 Lessons Learned

In addition, the team documented a series of lessons learnt, bringing together the knowledge acquired during the implementation of the programme.

- The evaluation exercise related to WELOD3 highlighted the great efforts promoted by AICS in an attempt to address the changing situation in Palestine, the Israeli occupation, and the difficulties and contradictions of the PA. Reconstructing the programme and the activities carried out by AICS as one of WELOD3 partners was particularly challenging due to the lack of a unified reporting system (including formats and timelines for reporting). In addition, due to the duration of the programme and staff turnover, it was very complicated to reconstruct the whole situation, also from a financial point of view. Among the donors, AICS is recognised as particularly strong for its support to Palestinian institutions and in particular to MoWA and MoSD. In addition, during the evaluation, there was clearly a general and consolidated recognition of its strong role in promoting 'courageous' initiatives, such as the Mehwar, which came into being at a time when talking about GBV was still considered 'haram' (forbidden).
- The **issue of Gaza** (activity 2.3) showed that despite the efforts and the excellent operational capacities of the actors involved, the realisation of the centre was not possible due to the political differences between the PA, in particular MoWA, a major supporter of the establishment of a Tawasol centre in Gaza, and the de-facto government in Gaza. During the same period in which the study was conducted, there were moments of tension between the de-facto government in Gaza and international organisations, also following the death of some Italian activists in the area. Considering the existing tensions and political disagreements, AICS decided to abandon the idea of building the centre.
- It has been recognised that **women's economic empowerment** is a multifaceted process that goes beyond capacity building and improving women's knowledge and skills. It should be accompanied by comprehensive interventions that support women in starting their own businesses or other forms of entrepreneurship. This approach can create significant economic *empowerment* and help women achieve economic independence.
- Understanding the **power dynamics** that exist within Palestinian society is key to addressing the social and cultural norms that hinder gender equality. Building alliances with various community groups, including community leaders, religious leaders, political parties, parents and others, is essential to prevent any negative or violent backlash against programmes aimed at addressing gender violence. Furthermore, it is important to carefully consider the tools used, such as film and art, especially in relatively traditional communities. These communities may need time and effort to recognise and embrace these mediums as effective tools for social change.
- The essential role played by **MoWA** in raising awareness and especially in establishing a ministry to represent gender issues at the national policy level and at the international level is recognised. However, its role and especially its functions need to be redefined, focusing more on the monitoring and evaluation function rather than on the direct implementation of activities.
- The importance of the **civil society involvement** is noted, especially with regard to the selection of beneficiaries, the implementation of *capacity-building* actions and ensuring that the training is carried out properly. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that in order to make the training action more effective, the intervention should have entrusted NGOs with the role of *coaching* in the creation of productive activities by the target women and the *follow-up* for a short period at the beginning of the start-up of these activities, as well as *counselling* activities to produce positive effects especially on the living conditions of victims and survivors.
- The opportunity to return to university and continue their studies, offered by the **scholarships for young women victims of GBV**, played a transformative role, strengthening their self-esteem and empowerment. However, despite enrolling in university and holding an academic certificate, the women interviewed reported facing a number of challenges, in terms of social marginalisation and finding employment. The real problem is the poor reputation that shelters

have among the population, as they are considered the last resort to turn to in case of (mainly domestic) violence. This creates a number of obstacles in terms of the creation of new facilities and government support for existing ones.

7. Recommendations

7.1 General Recommendations

- In order to enhance learning and transformative actions, the **creation of spaces for reflective learning** with all stakeholders through platforms or ad hoc *workshops* is recommended. These spaces should be designed to facilitate in-depth reflection, encourage the sharing of successful practices, innovative approaches and identify opportunities for collaboration and synergies.
- There is clear room for improvement in the implementation mechanism of future interventions if ad hoc technical assistance is provided to institutions in the fields of coordination, organisation (including a clear **programme governance scheme** identifying all actors involved) and day-to-day monitoring of planned activities.

7.2 Specific Recommendations

- Based on the findings of the assessment, it is clear that strengthening existing **governmental and non-governmental monitoring and accountability mechanisms** in Palestine will help the entire environment to better respond to real needs and, most importantly, give the donor community the opportunity to invest where funds can have a real impact. In practice, there is an increasing need to move from policy creation to policy implementation, prevention and enforcement of existing laws.
- **Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to support partners and counterparts in measuring results and collecting feedback.** Based on the results of this final evaluation, a key recommendation for the WELOD programme is to implement a robust M&E system. This system should be designed to help partners and counterparts effectively measure results and gather valuable feedback. By establishing a structured M&E framework, the programme can gradually instil a culture of evidence-based decision-making and learning. Furthermore, the collection of gender-sensitive indicators should be a key component of the M&E system to ensure inclusiveness and address the differential impact of activities on men, women, boys and girls in Palestinian society.
- **A C&V plan and an awareness-raising and advocacy strategy** should accompany further action, to spread knowledge and create a common understanding of the action and the results to be achieved.
- Report and inform on key outcomes or results through **consolidated and standardised reporting**. Each of the implementing partners and key stakeholders must contribute to the reports by providing a solid analysis of results or progress on objectives to be achieved and not just a description of activities.
- Conduct an **in-depth assessment of the capacity-building needs of key implementing ministries in the design phase in order to** better address existing structural/systematic weaknesses within PA institutions to ensure sustainability and impact.
- The evaluation exercise revealed a widespread and well-recognised '**training fatigue**' among PA officials, NGO and institutional staff. People are used to attending training courses on everything, without any yardstick for evaluating the impact, and they move from one course to another, driven more by the need to be away from their office than by the need to actually learn and progress in their curriculum. The training must include **follow-up** phases in which the participant can be evaluated not only at the end of the training itself, but also after a

specific period (to be indicated in the project proposal). Only in this way will the training guarantee a correct outcome.

- While institutions tend to have difficulty making rapid progress in supporting women in need with innovative and more responsive responses, **CSOs** have demonstrated not only a solid capacity to penetrate the internal channels of society, but also to respond correctly to the main needs of women, especially in remote areas. It would be of great impact to create a link between institutions and CSOs in terms of **training to be provided to staff of institutions and local authorities**, especially those working in sensitive areas such as gender and gender-based violence.
- Design should be more results-based (TOC). The tool of **results-based management (RBM)** could be adopted. In addition, the inclusion of an M&E system should be designed to go beyond monitoring activities to monitoring and evaluating results. Monitoring reports should elaborate on the problems and challenges faced by implementers, including the main discussion points and suggested solutions.
- In light of the political, economic and governance challenges, the evaluation recommends a priority focus on the **private sector as an engine for employment and growth**, on microfinance, and on an area-based approach to build capacity at the subnational and municipal level to identify needs, set priorities, plan, implement projects and manage resources in a transparent and participatory manner, enabling women to be true proactive actors.
- Given the fiscal and financial uncertainties and shrinking donor budgets, the evaluation team emphasised the need for development programmes to be financially sustainable. As part of this recommendation, it is important to emphasise that when addressing issues of gender equality, women's rights and the economic empowerment of women and girls, it is particularly important to also consider those who suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities, survivors of violence, women heads of households and those living in rural areas. A **needs assessment would be recommended** to better define the business sectors in which women can invest and engage.

ATTACHMENTS

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

Allegato 1



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI E DELLA COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE

*DIREZIONE GENERALE PER LA COOPERAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO
Ufficio III
Sezione Valutazione*

TERMINI DI RIFERIMENTO PER LA VALUTAZIONE INDIPENDENTE

“Women’s empowerment and Local Development 3 - WELOD 3”

PALESTINA

Valutazione d’impatto

ECODEV, HUMANDEV

AID 10119

Contesto e oggetto della valutazione

L'Italia svolge da tempo una forte azione a favore dell'empowerment sociale, culturale ed economico delle donne palestinesi. Grazie a questo impegno il nostro Paese è stato unanimemente riconosciuto leader nel settore "Uguaglianza di genere ed empowerment delle donne" nei Territori Palestinesi ed ha assunto ufficialmente il ruolo di Lead Donor europeo nel febbraio 2013 per il settore GEWE.

La Cooperazione Italiana è stata pioniere nell'affrontare il fenomeno della violenza contro le donne nei Territori Palestinesi attraverso la creazione, a partire dal 2001, del Centro Mehwar per la protezione e l'empowerment delle donne e delle famiglie. Il Centro si è affermato quale struttura di eccellenza per il trattamento dei casi di violenza di genere e costituisce un riferimento centrale per la costruzione delle politiche nazionali di lotta alla violenza, nonché un riferimento per l'intera area mediorientale.

Dopo la creazione del Ministero degli Affari delle Donne nel 2003, l'Italia è stata uno dei primi Paesi donatori a sostenere le politiche di gender mainstreaming di questo Ministero attraverso il programma TAMKEEN, grazie al quale sono stati creati nel 2005 i primi 4 Tawasol (Centri di formazione, informazione e comunicazione di carattere socio-economico, culturale e sociale) nei Governatorati di Nablus, Jenin, Betlemme ed Hebron.

L'azione della Cooperazione Italiana è stata rilanciata con il programma WELOD (Women's Empowerment and Local Development) a partire dal febbraio 2009, come parte del sostegno italiano al Piano di Riforma e Sviluppo (PRDP) 2008-2010 e in special modo all'obiettivo "Promuovere la partecipazione e l'empowerment delle donne nella società".

In un contesto in cui l'aiuto a favore dell'AP è passato dalla fase dell'emergenza a quella del capacity building, il programma WELOD offre specifica assistenza tecnica al Ministero degli Affari delle Donne e agli undici Governatorati della Cisgiordania per lo sviluppo di politiche ed azioni volte a proteggere i diritti delle donne e a migliorare le loro opportunità in termini sociali, economici e culturali proprio attraverso i centri Tawasol che dal 2010 sono presenti in tutti gli undici governatorati della Cisgiordania e gestiti dagli stessi in partenariato con il MoWA.

Dal 2013, con il Programma annuale WELOD II, si promuove l'empowerment socio-economico delle donne palestinesi e la lotta alla violenza di genere, attraverso la creazione di impiego qualificato femminile, la creazione di servizi di orientamento al lavoro, la promozione di politiche di prevenzione primaria e secondaria della violenza di genere e la promozione di politiche e percorsi di reintegrazione nella società delle donne sopravvissute alla violenza domestica.

WELOD fase 3 è una iniziativa che ha voluto dare continuità ad una attività di supporto al Ministero degli Affari delle donne (MoWA) attraverso azioni volte all'empowerment delle donne e di contrasto alla violenza di genere. In una ottica di ownership e di institution building, il programma prevede lo sviluppo di competenze specifiche all'interno del MoWA per promuovere il gender mainstreaming in tutte le istituzioni palestinesi, e la formazione sulla pianificazione, l'analisi, il monitoraggio e la valutazione di genere dei Piani Nazionali.

Il programma prevede altresì attività specifiche volte al sostegno dei servizi antiviolenza gestiti dal Ministero dello sviluppo Sociale (MoSD) e la creazione, presso il MoWA del primo Osservatorio nazionale sulle donne in difficoltà, la violenza di genere e lo stalking.

Con la suddetta iniziativa si intende dare continuità al lavoro che la Cooperazione Italiana ha iniziato a svolgere nell'ambito del ruolo di Lead Donor europeo nel settore GEWE, soprattutto in termini di coordinamento tematico intersettoriale con gli altri Stati membri e di preparazione di documenti programmatici e dei rapporti annuali sullo stato di avanzamento del GAP (Gender Action Plan).

L'allegata scheda descrittiva contiene le informazioni relative al documento previsionale. Il documento di progetto relativo all'iniziativa da valutare è allegato alla comunicazione con cui viene inviata la Lettera d'Invito. Nella fase di Desk Analysis, verrà fornita ulteriore documentazione.

Utilità della valutazione

Come illustrato in dettaglio nella sezione successiva, si chiede di valutare i risultati raggiunti dall'iniziativa, e soprattutto il suo impatto, sia allo scopo di garantire trasparenza e *accountability* (finalità particolarmente importante visto l'ammontare del finanziamento) che per avere indicazioni utili per orientare le future strategie di cooperazione allo sviluppo e la programmazione, nonché per migliorare la qualità degli interventi.

Verificare se le due componenti, una a gestione diretta e l'altra aiuto al Governo, possano essere ritenute le più efficaci per le azioni di cooperazione per quanto attiene le questioni di genere, con l'intento di replicare l'azione in altre aree geografiche, con particolare riferimento ai Paesi in Medio Oriente. Come l'ownership e la mutua responsabilità di sviluppo reciproco hanno armonizzato le azioni degli attori coinvolti.

Verificare se l'iniziativa ha potenziato il processo di empowerment socio-economico delle donne palestinesi mediante formazione e coaching per la creazione di imprese femminili in ogni Governatorato.

Verificare se il contrasto alla violenza di genere, con l'attività di supporto al Ministero degli Affari delle donne abbia promosso il gender mainstreaming in tutte le istituzioni palestinesi, e la formazione sulla pianificazione, l'analisi, il monitoraggio e la valutazione di genere dei Piani Nazionali.

Ambito ed obiettivi generali della valutazione

La valutazione dovrà esprimere un giudizio generale, adeguatamente motivato, sulla rilevanza degli obiettivi dell'iniziativa in relazione alle esigenze locali prioritarie nonché alla coerenza con le altre iniziative della Cooperazione italiana e degli altri donatori.

In base ai risultati raggiunti, tenendo conto anche degli indicatori elencati nel quadro logico, si valuterà l'efficacia dell'intervento, l'efficienza nell'utilizzo delle risorse a disposizione e la sostenibilità dei benefici conseguiti.

Al di là dei risultati immediati, si dovrà cercare di valutare soprattutto l'impatto dell'iniziativa valutata e descrivere quali cambiamenti essa abbia contribuito a determinare, o si possa ipotizzare che contribuirà a determinare, in via diretta o indirettamente, nell'ambito del contesto sociale, economico e ambientale nonché in relazione al raggiungimento degli obiettivi indicati nella scheda descrittiva allegata ed in relazione agli altri indicatori di sviluppo.

Si dovranno evidenziare gli effetti, anche solo potenziali, su benessere collettivo, diritti umani, eguaglianza di genere e ambiente e sottolineare il contributo ad eventuali cambiamenti di carattere strutturale e duraturo in sistemi o norme. Si dovrà analizzare in che misura e secondo quali meccanismi l'intervento abbia contribuito ai cambiamenti riscontrati come pure l'influenza di fattori esterni quali il contesto politico e le condizioni economiche e finanziarie.

La valutazione esaminerà anche il grado di logicità e coerenza del disegno del progetto e ne valuterà la validità complessiva.

Le conclusioni della valutazione saranno basate su risultati oggettivi, credibili, affidabili e validi, tali da permettere alla DGCS di elaborare misure di *management response*. Il rapporto finale di valutazione dovrà inoltre evidenziare le eventuali lezioni apprese e buone pratiche nonché fornire raccomandazioni utili per la realizzazione di futuri progetti simili. Sempre sulla base di quanto emerso dalla valutazione, potranno essere fornite raccomandazioni di carattere generale per migliorare la programmazione e la gestione degli interventi di cooperazione.

Attraverso le raccomandazioni e le lezioni apprese, la valutazione darà infatti notizie utili atte ad indirizzare al meglio i futuri finanziamenti di settore, a migliorare la programmazione politica dell'aiuto pubblico allo sviluppo e la gestione degli interventi programmati, dalla fase di progettazione alla realizzazione, includendo l'attività di monitoraggio e valutazione.

La diffusione dei risultati della valutazione permetterà inoltre di rendere conto al Parlamento circa l'utilizzo dei fondi stanziati per l'Aiuto Pubblico allo Sviluppo ed all'opinione pubblica italiana circa la validità

dell'allocazione delle risorse governative disponibili in attività di cooperazione. I risultati della valutazione e le esperienze acquisite saranno condivise con le principali Agenzie di cooperazione e con i partner locali. La valutazione favorirà anche la "mutual accountability" tra partner in relazione ai reciproci impegni.

Infine, mediante il coinvolgimento dei Paesi partner in ogni fase del suo svolgimento, la valutazione contribuirà al rafforzamento della loro capacità in materia di valutazione.

Il team di valutazione potrà suggerire e includere altri aspetti che siano congrui con lo scopo della valutazione.

Criteri

I criteri di valutazione, citati in precedenza, sono quelli definiti in ambito OCSE-DAC, assieme ai principi base per il loro utilizzo. Nel rimandare alle fonti OCSE-DAC per maggiori dettagli²⁹, di seguito si evidenziano i principali aspetti di ciascun criterio:

- **Rilevanza:** Il team di valutazione dovrà verificare in che misura l'obiettivo ed il disegno dell'iniziativa rispondano (e continuino a rispondere in presenza di mutate circostanze) ai bisogni, le politiche e le priorità dei beneficiari globali, del Paese e delle istituzioni del partner.
- **Coerenza:** Si verificherà la compatibilità dell'intervento con altri interventi nel settore, all'interno dello stesso Paese, sia da parte della cooperazione italiana che da parte di altri Paesi.
- **Efficacia:** La valutazione misurerà il grado e l'entità in cui gli obiettivi dell'iniziativa, intesi in termini di risultati diretti ed immediati, siano stati raggiunti o si prevede lo saranno, con attenzione ai diversi risultati all'interno dei vari gruppi di beneficiari.
- **Efficienza:** La valutazione analizzerà se l'utilizzo delle risorse sia stato ottimale, o si prevede lo sarà, per il conseguimento dei risultati del progetto sia in termini economici che di tempistica ed efficienza gestionale.
- **Impatto:** Si analizzeranno gli effetti significativi dell'intervento, positivi e negativi, previsti o imprevedibili, in un ambito più ampio ed in un lasso di tempo più lungo rispetto ai risultati diretti ed immediati. Nel valutare l'impatto si considereranno quindi gli effetti in ambito sociale, economico ed ambientale nonché relativi alle tematiche più importanti: benessere delle comunità, diritti umani, uguaglianza di genere etc.
- **Sostenibilità:** Si valuterà la potenziale continuità nel medio e nel lungo termine dei benefici dell'iniziativa, sia di quelli già prodottisi che di quelli che potranno derivarne in futuro.

Quesiti valutativi

I quesiti valutativi dovranno essere formulati soprattutto in funzione dell'utilità e degli obiettivi della valutazione. Anche l'interpretazione specifica dei criteri OCSE-DAC, nonché di eventuali criteri aggiuntivi, dipenderà da cosa la valutazione mira ad evidenziare e dall'utilizzo che della valutazione stessa si intende fare. Le domande sull'efficacia e sull'impatto dovranno basarsi sul livello degli *outcomes* e degli impatti specifici generati, anziché su specifici output e sull'impatto globale, difficilmente quantificabile.

Per meglio valutare l'impatto, una parte dei quesiti dovranno essere del tipo causa-effetto. Alcune domande dovranno essere indirizzate a tematiche trasversali (povertà, diritti umani, questioni di genere o ambientali etc.).

In ogni caso, i quesiti (principali e supplementari) dovranno essere formulati quanto più possibile in maniera dettagliata, facendo riferimento alle specifiche caratteristiche degli interventi, in forma chiara e con un taglio operativo che tenga anche conto della concreta possibilità di darvi una risposta.

Principi generali, approccio e metodologia

a) La valutazione deve essere in linea con i più elevati standard internazionali di riferimento e tiene conto delle rilevanti linee guida della cooperazione italiana.

²⁹ Per le definizioni dei Criteri OCSE si rinvia al seguente link <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

Le valutazioni realizzate dalla DGCS si basano sui seguenti principi: utilità, credibilità, indipendenza, imparzialità, trasparenza, eticità, professionalità, diritti umani, parità di genere e sul principio del *leave no-one behind*

La valutazione deve essere condotta con i più elevati standard di integrità e rispetto delle regole civili, degli usi e costumi, dei diritti umani e dell'uguaglianza di genere e del principio del "non nuocere". A questo riguardo, si raccomanda di non inserire nei rapporti, che saranno oggetto di pubblicazione, nominativi individuali degli attori locali (beneficiari, persone intervistate a qualunque titolo, etc.), foto che ritraggono singoli individui identificabili né altre informazioni da considerare sensibili nel contesto della specifica valutazione (es.: partner attuatori facilmente identificabili). Ciò al fine di tenere conto dei rischi derivanti dal contesto di sicurezza in cui si inserisce la valutazione. La presenza di foto dovrà essere presa in considerazione con la massima attenzione alla protezione ed alla dignità della persona.

Le tematiche trasversali (tra cui diritti umani, ambiente etc..) dovranno avere la dovuta considerazione ed i risultati della valutazione in questi ambiti dovranno essere adeguatamente evidenziati con una modalità trasversale.

b) Per valutare quanto gli interventi abbiano inciso sulla capacità di concedere i diritti umani e di pretenderne il godimento, si utilizzerà lo *Human Rights Based Approach*.

Più in generale, il team di valutazione userà un *Results Based Approach* che comprenderà l'analisi di varie fonti informative e di dati derivanti da documentazione di progetto, relazioni di monitoraggio, interviste con le controparti governative, con lo staff del progetto, con i beneficiari diretti, sia a livello individuale sia aggregati in *focus group*.

A questo scopo, il team di valutazione intraprenderà una missione in Palestina.

Il processo di valutazione dovrà essere focalizzato sull'utilità attesa della valutazione.

c) Il team di valutazione dovrà adottare metodologie sia qualitative che quantitative in modo tale da poter triangolare i risultati ottenuti con l'utilizzo di ciascuna di esse. Nella scelta delle metodologie da utilizzare, il team di valutazione dovrà tenere conto degli obiettivi che la valutazione si propone nonché delle dimensioni e caratteristiche degli interventi.

In ogni caso, si dovrà esplicitare quali metodi si utilizzano sia per la valutazione che per la raccolta dei dati e la loro analisi, motivando la scelta e chiarendo le modalità di applicazione degli stessi.

Le metodologie utilizzate dovranno essere in accordo con tutti i principi enunciati in precedenza nei punti a e b. In particolare, la prospettiva di genere dovrà sempre essere integrata (alla luce del tipo di intervento valutato) e con modalità che dovranno essere indicate nella proposta tecnica presentata (ad esempio, la presenza nel team di personale di sesso femminile o comunque esperto in materia di genere, raccolta ed analisi dei dati in maniera disaggregata per genere etc.).

Nella fase di avvio della valutazione, i valutatori dovranno:

- 1- elaborare la teoria del cambiamento, compatibilmente con le modalità di impostazione progettuale degli interventi;
- 2- proporre le principali domande di valutazione e le domande supplementari, in maniera puntuale e tenendo conto delle caratteristiche specifiche degli interventi;
- 3- elaborare la matrice di valutazione, che, per ciascuna delle domande di valutazione e domande supplementari che si è deciso di prendere in considerazione, indichi le tecniche che si intendono utilizzare per la raccolta dei dati e fornisca altre informazioni quali i metodi di misura, eventuali indicatori, la presenza o meno di *baseline* e quanto altro opportuno in base alle esigenze della valutazione;
- 4- stabilire le modalità di partecipazione degli stakeholder alla valutazione con particolare attenzione ai beneficiari e ai gruppi più vulnerabili.

Coinvolgimento degli stakeholder

I metodi utilizzati dovranno essere il più partecipativi possibile, prevedendo in tutte le fasi il coinvolgimento dei destinatari “istituzionali” della valutazione, del Paese partner, dei beneficiari degli interventi ed in generale di tutti i principali stakeholder.

Il team di valutazione dovrà coinvolgere gli stakeholder locali nella realizzazione della valutazione realizzando attività formative di capacity building volte a migliorare la capacità valutative del Partner.

Inoltre, al termine della visita sul campo, le informazioni utili alla valutazione raccolte saranno condivise dal team con gli stakeholder locali.

I partner principali dell’iniziativa sono rappresentati dal MoWA, dal MoSD (Ministero dello Sviluppo Sociale) già MoSA, e dal Ministero delle Finanze palestinesi, quest’ultimo relativamente alla componente di supporto al bilancio.

I due enti realizzatori sono il MoWA ed il MoSD. La gestione dei finanziamenti di supporto al bilancio sarà congiunta e vedrà implicati sia i due ministeri summenzionati sia la DGCS, rappresentata da esperti individuati all’avvio del progetto.

Parteciperanno alla gestione del progetto anche gli 11 Governatorati, con particolare riferimento ai Centri Tawasol, situati al loro interno, presso i quali si svolgerà una parte consistente delle attività progettuali.

Qualità della valutazione

Il team di valutazione userà diversi metodi (inclusa la triangolazione) al fine di assicurare che i dati rilevati siano validi.

La valutazione dovrà conformarsi ai *Quality Standards for Development Evaluation* dell’OCSE/DAC³⁰.

Profilo del team di valutazione

Il servizio di valutazione dovrà essere svolto da un team di valutazione, composto da almeno 3 membri, incluso il *team leader*, il quale sarà il referente della DGCS per l’intera procedura e parteciperà alle riunioni ed ai seminari previste dal piano di lavoro. Si raccomanda di costituire un team Gender Oriented.

Il *team leader* dovrà avere i seguenti requisiti minimi:

- Diploma di laurea triennale.
- Padronanza della lingua italiana, parlata e scritta³¹.
- Padronanza della lingua inglese, parlata e scritta.
- Esperienza in attività di valutazione di iniziative di cooperazione allo sviluppo (almeno 3 anni).
- Esperienza in coordinamento di team multidisciplinari (almeno 1 anno).
- Conoscenza approfondita della metodologia RBM e del ciclo del progetto nonché di progetti di cooperazione allo sviluppo.
- Conoscenza degli strumenti e modalità di intervento della Cooperazione italiana.

Gli altri due membri obbligatori del team dovranno possedere i seguenti requisiti minimi:

- Diploma di laurea triennale.
- Padronanza della lingua inglese, parlata e scritta.
- Esperienza in attività di valutazione di iniziative di cooperazione allo sviluppo (almeno 1 anno).
- Conoscenza della gestione del ciclo del progetto e dei progetti di cooperazione allo sviluppo.
- Competenze sulla tematica di Genere.

³⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

³¹ Per padronanza si intende qui, come in seguito, una conoscenza della lingua in questione al livello C del QCER (non sono richiesti formali attestati)

Il team di valutazione dovrà inoltre disporre delle seguenti competenze, che potranno essere possedute da uno o più membri obbligatori o aggiuntivi:

- Conoscenza del Paese e del contesto istituzionale.
- Conoscenza della lingua araba come lingua veicolare
- Competenza in interviste, ricerche documentate, raccolta e analisi dei dati.
- Competenza adeguata in tematiche trasversali.
- Ottime capacità analitiche, redazionali e di presentazione dei dati.

Il team di valutazione potrà includere esperti locali in qualità di membri del team stesso.

Prodotti dell'esercizio di valutazione

Si elencano di seguito gli output dell'esercizio.

- Un **Rapporto d'Avvio in lingua italiana** (intorno alle 20 pagine), da trasmettere alla stazione appaltante entro la scadenza concordata in occasione dell'incontro di avvio della valutazione presso la DGCS (generalmente 20 giorni). Il documento dovrà includere la descrizione dell'ambito della valutazione, dei quesiti valutativi principali e supplementari, dei criteri e degli indicatori che verranno utilizzati per rispondere alle domande, delle metodologie che si intendono utilizzare per la raccolta e l'analisi dei dati e per la valutazione in generale, della definizione del ruolo e delle responsabilità di ciascun membro del team di valutazione, del piano di lavoro comprensivo del cronoprogramma delle attività e delle modalità di svolgimento delle visite sul campo.
- Un **Rapporto finale** (max 50 pagine allegati esclusi) **in lingua italiana e tradotto in inglese**. Oltre che in **formato Word e Pdf (max 3Mb)**, i rapporti nelle 2 lingue dovranno essere forniti, **in formato cartaceo rilegato in brossura, nella misura di 4 copie per ciascuna delle 2 lingue (8 copie complessive)**. La redazione e la traduzione in lingua dovranno essere di un livello qualitativo professionale. Il Rapporto dovrà inoltre contenere elementi di infografica che facilitino la lettura e diano immediata evidenza delle risultanze della valutazione. Ulteriori indicazioni in merito al formato e alla struttura del rapporto sono fornite nella relativa scheda descrittiva.
- Una **Sintesi del Rapporto Finale** (max 20 pagine), **in lingua italiana e tradotto in inglese**. Oltre che in **formato Word e Pdf (max 3Mb)**, le sintesi nelle 2 lingue dovranno essere forniti **in formato cartaceo rilegato in brossura, nella misura di 4 copie per ciascuna delle 2 lingue (8 copie complessive)**. Le copie cartacee dovranno essere dotate di copertina plastificata. La redazione e la traduzione in lingua dovranno essere di un livello qualitativo professionale. Il Rapporto dovrà inoltre contenere elementi di infografica che facilitino la lettura e diano immediata evidenza delle risultanze della valutazione. Nella versione sintetica del rapporto si dovranno necessariamente includere l'ambito e gli obiettivi della valutazione, l'approccio metodologico, le principali conclusioni e le raccomandazioni.
- **Documentazione fotografica** (in alta definizione) sull'iniziativa valutata e sul suo contesto, a sostegno delle conclusioni della valutazione, fornita su supporto informatico.
- **Due presentazioni Power Point**, rispettivamente in italiano ed in inglese, per illustrare le principali risultanze della valutazione (da utilizzare anche a supporto dei seminari programmati).
- **Seminario di presentazione del rapporto finale presso il MAECI-DGCS.**
- **Seminario di presentazione del rapporto finale in loco.**

Seguono:

- **Scheda descrittiva del progetto;**
- **Disposizioni gestionali e piano di lavoro;**
- **Scheda relativa a formato e struttura del Rapporto di valutazione.**

<p align="center">SCHEDA DESCRITTIVA PROGETTO</p>
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TITOLO DEL PROGRAMMA	Women's Empowerment and Local Development - WELOD3- AID 10119
LUOGO DEL PROGRAMMA	PALESTINA
LINGUA DEL PROGRAMMA	Inglese
DURATA EFFETTIVA	8 anni: dal luglio 2014 al marzo 2022 (Audit entro fine anno)
CANALE DI FINANZIAMENTO	Bilaterale
TIPOLOGIA	Dono
BUDGET TOTALE	Supporto al bilancio ex Art.15 Euro 1.700.000 Fondo in loco Euro 1.090.000 Fondo Esperti Euro 510.000
ENTE ESECUTORE	Ministero degli Affari delle Donne, Ministero degli Affari Sociali ora Ministero dello Sviluppo Sociale, AICS sede locale- Gerusalemme
OBIETTIVI DEL MILLENNIO (MDGs)	O1: Eliminare l'estrema povertà e la fame. O3: Promuovere la parità fra uomo e donna.
OBIETTIVI DI SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE (SDGs)	O5: Raggiungere l'uguaglianza di genere e l'autodeterminazione di tutte le donne e ragazze. O8: Buona occupazione e crescita economica.

Contesto dell'iniziativa

Dopo la creazione del Ministero degli Affari delle Donne nel 2003, l'Italia è stata uno dei primi Paesi donatori a sostenere le politiche di gender mainstreaming di questo Ministero attraverso il programma TAMKEEN, grazie al quale sono stati creati nel 2005 i primi 4 Tawasol (Centri di formazione, informazione e comunicazione di carattere socio-economico, culturale e sociale) nei Governatorati di Nablus, Jenin, Betlemme ed Hebron.

Obiettivo generale e specifico.

L'Obiettivo generale è quello di accrescere le opportunità di sviluppo economico delle donne palestinesi e contribuire all'applicazione degli strumenti internazionali per la difesa dei loro diritti.

Gli Obiettivi specifici sono:

- 1) Rafforzare le capacità di gender mainstreaming e di contrasto alla violenza di genere del Ministero delle Donne (MoWA), dei Governatorati e del Ministero degli Affari Sociali (MoSA);
- 2) Potenziare il processo di empowerment economico, politico, sociale e culturale delle donne e, insieme, contrastare la violenza di genere favorendo la reintegrazione nella società delle donne che hanno subito violenza;
- 3) Coordinare il settore trasversale "Uguaglianza di genere e empowerment delle donne" come Lead Donor europeo.

Finanziamento

Il costo totale previsto è di Euro 3.300.000,00.

L'iniziativa si avvale di due componenti: una di Supporto al bilancio (ex. Art. 15) ed una a Gestione Diretta.

La Componente di Supporto al bilancio, realizzata dal MoWA e dal MoSA ora MoSA, prevede un contributo del valore di 1.700.000 euro.

La Componente a Gestione Diretta prevede fondi in loco per un valore di 1.000.000, e un fondo esperti per un importo di 600.000 euro.

Descrizione dell'intervento

Il programma mira all'accrescimento delle opportunità di sviluppo socio-economico delle donne palestinesi e alla protezione dei loro diritti mediante un supporto al bilancio del Ministero degli Affari delle Donne (MoWA) e del Ministero degli Affari Sociali (MoSA), accanto ad attività in gestione diretta. In un'ottica di ownership e di institution building il programma prevede lo sviluppo di competenze specifiche all'interno del MoWA per promuovere il gender mainstreaming in tutte le istituzioni palestinesi e nella struttura di coordinamento degli aiuti (LACS), la formazione sulla pianificazione, l'analisi, il monitoraggio e la valutazione di genere dei Piani nazionali e dei settori di intervento. Il programma prevede altresì attività specifiche volte al sostegno dei servizi antiviolenza gestiti dal MoSA e la creazione, presso il MoWA, del primo Osservatorio nazionale sulle donne in difficoltà (attualmente parzialmente funzionante) la violenza di genere e lo stalking. In sinergia con altri programmi della Cooperazione Italiana inclusi nella programmazione triennale: Start up Palestine - Strumenti finanziari e assistenza tecnica per promuovere l'occupazione e la generazione di reddito in Palestina per il settore sviluppo economico e POSIT -

Potenziamento del sistema di cure primarie nei Territori Palestinesi per il settore salute che sono parte della programmazione triennale, oltre al programma Diritti Umani, per il settore giustizia l'iniziativa intende potenziare il processo di empowerment socio-economico delle donne palestinesi mediante formazione e coaching per la creazione di imprese femminili in ogni Governatorato e informazione sul "Codice Rosa".

Risultati da conseguire

Risultati per Obiettivo specifico 1: Rafforzare le capacità di gender mainstreaming e di contrasto alla violenza di genere del Ministero delle Donne (MoWA), dei Governatorati e del Ministero degli Affari Sociali (MoSA) ora Ministero dello Sviluppo Sociale(MoSA).

Risultati per Obiettivo specifico 2: Potenziare il processo di empowerment economico, politico, sociale e culturale delle donne e, insieme, contrastare la violenza di genere favorendo la reintegrazione nella società delle donne che hanno subito violenza.

Risultati per Obiettivo specifico 3: Coordinare il settore trasversale “Uguaglianza di genere e empowerment delle donne” come Lead Donor europeo.

Elenco dei beneficiari

Circa 400 donne che usufruiranno dei servizi messi loro a disposizione dagli 11 Tawasol e dai servizi antiviolenza, incluse le attività di empowerment socio-economico e di lotta alla violenza contro le donne;

- Circa 20 bambini che usufruiranno dei servizi messi loro a disposizione dai servizi antiviolenza;
- Almeno 200 organizzazioni di donne palestinesi e altre organizzazioni della società civile che operano in favore delle donne;
- Almeno 30 istituzioni locali membri dei Tawasol;
- Le controparti locali:

Lo staff del MoWA, in particolare le/i dirigenti responsabili dei dipartimenti che collaborano con i centri Tawasol (Politiche e pianificazione; Formazione; Ricorsi).

- I Governatorati, in particolare:

- * le 11 Direttrici dei Centri Tawasol/Direttrici Dipartimenti Donne e Bambini

- * gli 11 Governatori

- * 11 rappresentanti dei futuri Comitati di Reintegrazione dei Centri Tawasol

- * 11 direttori/trici e/o personale tecnico dipartimenti legali dei Governatorati

- Il MoSA, in particolare:

- * 11 responsabili del dipartimento “Women and Childhood” delle Direzioni locali del MoSA.

- operatori/trici sociali delle Direzioni locali del MoSA

- * le operatori/trici specializzati/e che usufruiranno della formazione sia a livello universitario sia a livello di strutture pubbliche

DISPOSIZIONI GESTIONALI E PIANO DI LAVORO

Desk Analysis	In questa prima fase i valutatori esamineranno la documentazione riguardante il progetto. Dopo la firma del contratto la DGCS fornirà al team di valutazione ulteriore documentazione relativa all'iniziativa oggetto della valutazione. Nella riunione d'avvio, il team incontrerà i rappresentanti degli uffici della DGCS, gli esperti/funzionari dell'Agenzia ed altri stakeholder rilevanti.
Rapporto d'avvio	Il team dovrà predisporre il Rapporto d'avvio (vedi pag. 9), che sarà soggetto ad approvazione da parte della DGCS, entro la scadenza concordata in occasione dell'incontro di avvio della valutazione presso la DGCS (generalmente 20 giorni).
Visita sul campo	Coordinandosi con il MAECI, l'Ambasciata d'Italia e la Sede dell'AICS a Gerusalemme, il team di valutazione visiterà i luoghi dell'iniziativa, intervisterà le parti interessate, i beneficiari e raccoglierà ogni informazione utile alla valutazione. Il team di valutazione si recherà sul campo per un periodo stimato di venti giorni complessivi (la durata effettiva sarà determinata dall'offerente). Il suddetto periodo dovrà essere coperto da almeno uno dei membri obbligatori. La presenza in loco del team leader, anche per un periodo circoscritto, è incentivata con l'attribuzione di relativo punteggio in sede di valutazione dell'offerta tecnica (Piano di lavoro). Al termine della visita sul campo, le informazioni utili alla valutazione raccolte saranno condivise dal team con gli stakeholder locali.
Bozza del rapporto di valutazione	Il team predisporrà la bozza del rapporto di valutazione, che dovrà essere inviata per l'approvazione da parte della DGCS.
Commenti delle parti interessate e feedback	La bozza di rapporto sarà sottoposta ai soggetti interni alla DGCS, ai rappresentanti dell'Agenzia e altri eventuali stakeholder individuati dalla DGCS per questa finalità. Commenti e feedback saranno comunicati ai valutatori invitandoli a dare i chiarimenti richiesti e fare eventuali contro-obiezioni.
Seminario presso la DGCS	La DGCS organizzerà un Seminario per la presentazione da parte del team della bozza del rapporto di valutazione, per l'acquisizione di eventuali commenti e feedback da parte dei soggetti di cui al paragrafo precedente, utili alla stesura del rapporto definitivo.
Rapporto finale e documentazione accessoria	Il team di valutazione, tenendo conto dei commenti ricevuti, definirà il rapporto finale e lo trasmetterà alla DGCS, per l'approvazione. Il rapporto può includere i commenti degli stakeholder. Al rapporto saranno allegati i ToRs, la lista completa dei quesiti valutativi con relativi indicatori e fonti e l'elenco della documentazione consultata. Assieme al rapporto dovrà essere fornito il materiale fotografico e l'ulteriore documentazione prodotta nel corso della valutazione: i questionari, i documenti specifici prodotti per gli approfondimenti di particolari tematiche o linee di intervento, le fonti informative secondarie utilizzate, le tecniche di raccolta dei dati nell'ambito di indagini ad hoc, le modalità di organizzazione ed esecuzione delle interviste, la definizione e le modalità di quantificazione delle diverse categorie di indicatori utilizzati, le procedure e le tecniche per l'analisi dei dati e per la formulazione delle risposte ai quesiti valutativi, inclusa la Matrice di Valutazione etc.
Seminario in loco	Il team di valutazione organizzerà, in coordinamento con la DGCS, un seminario per la presentazione alle controparti del rapporto finale di valutazione. I risultati della valutazione verranno presentati ai principali interlocutori locali: soggetti istituzionali, enti esecutori, rappresentanti dei beneficiari etc. I costi organizzativi del seminario (incluso affitto della sala, catering, eventuali rimborsi per lo spostamento dei partecipanti locali) saranno integralmente a carico dell'offerente. Le modalità organizzative di massima del seminario dovranno essere illustrate nell'offerta del concorrente e concordate in tempo utile nel dettaglio con la DGCS.

FORMATO E STRUTTURA DEL RAPPORTO DI VALUTAZIONE

Rilegatura	In broccura con copertina plastificata recante l'indicazione del titolo dell'iniziativa anche nella parte laterale.
Carattere	Arial o Times New Roman, corpo 12 minimo
Copertina	Il file relativo alla prima pagina sarà fornito dall'Ufficio III della DGCS assieme ai contenuti da inserire nella prima pagina (modalità di aggiudicazione, disclaimer etc.)
Lista degli acronimi	Sarà inserita una lista degli acronimi utilizzati
Localizzazione degli interventi	Inserire una carta geografica relativa alle aree oggetto dell'iniziativa.
Sintesi iniziale	Quadro sintetico di contesto, ambito ed obiettivi della valutazione, metodologia di raccolta e analisi dati, principali conclusioni e raccomandazioni. Segnalare che del rapporto finale è disponibile una versione sintetica. (Max 5 pagine)
Contesto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situazione Paese (Max 2 pagine), basata su informazioni rilevate da fonti internazionali accreditate. - Breve descrizione delle politiche di sviluppo attive nel Paese, con particolare riferimento alla cooperazione italiana, e della sua situazione politico-istituzionale, socio-economica e culturale.
Ambito ed obiettivo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descrizione delle iniziative valutate che includa logica e strategia di base, obiettivi generali e specifici, risultati previsti e stato di realizzazione dei singoli progetti. - Obiettivi generali e specifici della valutazione.
Quadro teorico e metodologico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I criteri di valutazione. - La metodologia utilizzata e la sua applicazione, segnalando le eventuali difficoltà incontrate. - Le fonti informative e il loro grado di attendibilità.
Presentazione dei risultati	La presentazione dei risultati della valutazione dovrà articolarsi sulla base dei quesiti formulati dall'offerente e delle relative risposte (adeguatamente documentate).
Conclusioni	Le conclusioni, fondate sui risultati della valutazione, includeranno un giudizio chiaro e motivato in merito a ciascuno dei criteri di valutazione e dovranno tenere conto di quanto richiesto nella sezione Utilità dei ToRs e delle tematiche trasversali.
Raccomandazioni	Le raccomandazioni, relative ad aspetti specifici delle iniziative valutate o a carattere generale, devono comunque essere fondate sulle risultanze e le conclusioni della valutazione. Sono indirizzate ai destinatari istituzionali e finalizzate al miglioramento delle strategie della cooperazione italiana e dei progetti futuri. Per facilitare la management response devono essere limitate nel numero (indicativamente non più di 10 raccomandazioni principali) e prevedere una formulazione sintetica che evidenzi chiaramente l'azione da svolgere, accompagnata da un eventuale ulteriore testo esplicativo.
Lezioni apprese e buone pratiche	Sono fondate sulle risultanze della valutazione e possono andare al di là del ristretto ambito del progetto.
Allegati inseriti nel rapporto	In calce al rapporto devono essere inseriti i ToRs, la lista completa dei quesiti valutativi con relativi indicatori e fonti e l'elenco della documentazione consultata. Ulteriori allegati possono essere inseriti se non contengono dati potenzialmente sensibili (nominativi individuali ed altre informazioni che possono essere usate per identificare individui). Nel rapporto può anche essere inserito l'elenco di tutta la documentazione accessoria prodotta (questionari etc.), inclusa quella non allegata.

ANNEX 2: List of evaluation questions and related indicators

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AS PER INCEPTION REPORT

Criterion	Evaluation questions	Indicators
Impact ³²	What effects - positive and negative, expected and unexpected - has the intervention produced on the recognition and protection of women's rights, on the fight against gender-based violence and on policies and actions to support women's empowerment? To what extent has the programme helped to identify innovative modes of intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative effects on the formulation of policies to combat gender-based violence • Effects on the quantity and quality of the formulation of legislation implementing policies to prevent and combat gender-based violence • Effects on equal opportunities mainstreaming at the level of the institutions involved • Effects on the inclusion of <i>gender budgeting</i> measures in PA sectoral policies • Effects on women's socio-economic empowerment services • Effects on primary and secondary prevention services for gender-based violence • Effects on services for women victims of gender-based violence • Effects on job creation and orientation services • Mobilisation of new civil society actors in relation to the services and policies covered by the action • Effects on coordination between different stakeholders (donors, institutions and civil society) • Innovative strategic approaches
Relevance	To what extent did the intervention implemented respond to the needs and priorities highlighted in the area of recognition and protection of women's rights, support for women's economic empowerment and GBV prevention and response in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality level of design (logic and structure) • Extent to which women's needs and priorities in terms of recognition and implementation of their rights and in terms of prevention and response to GBV have been addressed by the intervention • Participation in the design and implementation of the intervention by key <i>stakeholders</i> • Degree to which the programme is responsive to changes in the context (programme flexibility and inclusiveness), in terms of economic, environmental, equity, social, cultural, political economy considerations and the capacity of individual actors • Existence of adaptive mechanisms at the level of the institutional architecture capable of responding to changes during its lifetime • Degree to which marginalised groups are incorporated into the priorities of policy and intervention (Agenda 2030: 'reach the last first') • The extent to which the intervention is aligned with the strategies and policies of Palestinian institutions

³² For the correct interpretation of the 'impact' criterion, reference to section 4.2.1 is recommended.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of the intervention compared to interventions in the same sector in the country and regional context
Consistency	To what extent do policies in the area of recognition and support of women's rights support or undermine the intervention and vice versa? What are the synergies and interconnections between the intervention and other interventions conducted by the same entity and in relation to international standards (internal coherence)? How was the intervention harmonised/coordinated with other actors in the same field (external coherence)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence of the programme implementation modalities with national policies • Presence of relevant issues with respect to the promotion of women's rights that were not taken into account by the programme • Possible presence of relevant actors and organisations not involved in the programme • Possible presence of relevant legislative, organisational, social and cultural obstacles not considered in the programme formulation • Lack of connection between planned actions and the solution of problems related to the promotion of women's rights • Level of continuity with interventions promoted in the same sector (including previous phases of WELOD) • Level of coordination with representatives of other actors in the same sector/type of intervention (donors, NGOs, UN agencies, etc.). • Presence of gaps and/or duplication of the same type of intervention
Effectiveness	To what extent have the activities foreseen in the programme been implemented? To what extent have the expected results been achieved? What was the process through which the intervention was implemented? What were the decisive factors in this process? What were the unwanted effects (negative or positive)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to planning in the implementation of planned actions (analysis of any positive and negative effects, desired or otherwise) • Activities carried out in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The formulation and implementation of policies to combat gender-based violence - Gender mainstreaming in policies and the inclusion of gender budgeting measures in PA sectoral policies - The improvement of women's socio-economic empowerment services - Improving primary and secondary prevention services for gender-based violence - Improving services for women victims of gender-based violence - The improvement of job creation and orientation services - The mobilisation of new civil society actors in relation to the services and policies covered by the action - Coordination between actors with different interests • Activation and smooth functioning of the monitoring and evaluation system • Activation and smooth functioning of communication activities
Efficiency	To what extent was the execution of the initiative, through proper use of resources, consistent with the financial forecast? Since efficiency concerns the choice between feasible alternatives that can deliver similar results with the available resources,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of possible delays related to the mobilisation and use of financial resources • Identification of significant delays or variations in the mobilisation of human and technical resources • Possible need for mobilisation of additional resources and their actual allocation • Need for additional activities • Presence of any unused resources

	were there really feasible alternatives that were comparable in terms of quality and results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions that helped improve efficiency in response to new information
Sustainability	<p>To what extent do the results obtained through the initiative continue after its conclusion?</p> <p>To what extent did the initiative promote the establishment of mechanisms to mobilise resources and relevant actors to ensure the durability of the results obtained?</p> <p>How has the intervention ensured the strengthening of systems, institutions or capacities to support women's rights and their implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity and quality of activities and services that have become the subject of regulations or included in the normal operation of services (<i>institutional sustainability</i>) • Quantity and quality of "gender mainstreaming" norms inserted after the implementation of the programme within the institutions involved in the intervention (<i>institutional sustainability</i>) • Possible identification and implementation of permanent financing, cost recovery, <i>fund-raising</i> mechanisms for the management of services (<i>economic sustainability</i>) • New actors involved in service provision (<i>socio-cultural sustainability</i>) • Activated services actually used by beneficiaries (<i>socio-cultural sustainability</i>) • Definition and implementation of strategies for the sustainability of services or actions (<i>economic and institutional sustainability</i>)
Visibility and communication	To what extent was the initiative accompanied by a communication action designed to promote the very aims of the programme and the visibility of Italian cooperation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of awareness of the initiative by key <i>stakeholders</i> (civil society organisations, government, other donors, etc.) • Awareness of issues related to gender equality, gender-based violence and women's <i>empowerment</i> among key stakeholders (civil society organisations, line ministries, other donors, etc.)

Evaluation Criteria	Judging Criteria	Indicators	Means and sources of verification
EQ1 What effects - positive and negative, expected and unexpected - has the intervention had on the recognition and protection of women's rights, on combating gender-based violence and on policies and actions supporting women's empowerment?			
IMPACT	Changes and emerging 'impact elements' or rather 'impact trends or orientations'.	• Quantitative effects on the formulation of policies against gender-based violence	Documents
		• Effects on the quantity and quality of the wording of legislation implementing policies to prevent and combat gender-based violence	Documents and interviews with staff from ministries, AICS and other agencies.
		• Effects on gender mainstreaming at the level of the institutions involved	Interviews with ministerial staff, governorate staff
		• Effects on the inclusion of gender budgeting measures in PA sectoral policies	Documents
		• Effects on coordination between different stakeholders (donors, institutions and civil society)	Interviews
		• Innovative strategic approaches	Documents and interviews
EQ2 To what extent has the programme helped to identify innovative modes of intervention?			
IMPACT	Changes and emerging 'impact elements' or rather 'impact trends or orientations'.	• Effects on women's socio-economic empowerment services	Beneficiary interviews and focus groups
		• Effects on primary and secondary prevention services for gender-based violence	
		• Effects on services for women victims of gender-based violence	
		• Effects on job creation and guidance services	
		• Mobilisation of new civil society actors in relation to the services and policies targeted by the action.	
		• Innovative strategic approaches	
EQ 3 To what extent did the implemented intervention address the needs and priorities in the area of women's rights, support for women's economic empowerment, prevention and response to GBV in the country?			
RELEVANCE		• Quality level of design (logic and structure)	Documents
		• Degree of responsiveness of the intervention to women's needs and priorities in terms of recognition and implementation of their rights and in terms of preventing and responding to gender-based violence.	Interviews FG
		• Participation in the design and implementation of the intervention by key stakeholders	Documents Interviews FG

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Degree of responsiveness of the programme to changes in the context (flexibility and inclusiveness of the programme), in terms of economic, environmental, equity, social, cultural, political economy considerations and in terms of the capacity of individual actors.	Documents Interviews FG
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Presence of adaptation mechanisms at the level of the institutional architecture, capable of responding to changes in the course of its life.	Documents Interviews FG
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Degree of integration of marginalised groups in the priorities of policies and interventions (Agenda 2030: 'Reaching the last first')	Documents Interviews FG
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">The extent to which intervention is aligned with the strategies and policies of Palestinian institutions.	Documents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">The intervention was compared with interventions in the same sector in the national and regional context.	Documents Interviews
EQ4 What are the synergies and interconnections between the intervention and other interventions conducted by the same organisation and in relation to international standards (internal coherence)?			
COHERENCE		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Level of continuity with interventions promoted in the same sector (including previous phases of WELOD)Level of coordination with representatives of other actors in the same sector/type of intervention (donors, NGOs, UN agencies, etc.).Presence of gaps and/or duplication of the same type of intervention	
EQ5 How was the intervention harmonised/coordinated with other actors in the same sector (external coherence)?			
COHERENCE		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coherence of programme implementation modalities with national policiesPresence of relevant issues with respect to the promotion of women's rights that were not taken into account by the programme.Possible presence of relevant actors and organisations not involved in the programmePossible presence of legislative, organisational, social and cultural obstacles not considered in the programme formulationLack of linkage between planned actions and the solution of problems related to the promotion of women's rights	

ANNEX 3: List of persons and organisations consulted

1. Key informant interviews

Tawasol Centres	
Bethlehem	1 representative
Jenin	1 representative
Jericho	1 representative
Tubas	1 representative
Tulkarem	1 representative
NGOs	
PWWSD	1 representative
MIFTAH	1 representative
SHASHAT Woman Cinema	1 representative
REFORM	1 representative
Women Affairs Technical Committee	1 representative
Rural Women Development Society	1 representative
Shams	1 representative
Women Business Forum	1 representative
Academic institutions	
Women's studies Institute- BirZeit University	2 representatives
Palestinian Government	
MOWA	4 representatives
MoSD	3 representatives
Governorates	
Tulkarim Governorate	4 representatives
Governorate of Bethlehem	3 representatives
Ramallah Governorate	3 representatives
Tubas Governorate	2 representatives
International Stakeholders	
EU	1 representative
UNWomen	1 representative
UNFPA	3 representatives

2. Focus Group Participants

Name of FG/location	
FG/ Tawasol-Ramallah coordinators (1)	4 representatives
FG/ Tawasol-Ramallah coordinators (2)	3 representatives
FG/Mehawer Staff/Bethlehem	12 representatives
FG/ Scholarship winner/Bethlehem	4 representatives
FG/Women's benefits/Tulkarm	3 representatives
FG/Women Business Forum	9 representatives
Workshop	6 representatives

ANNEX 4: List of documents consulted

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REFORM: Alternative Initiative Report, Narrative Report June 2021 to August 2021

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European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2021-2024, *Towards a democratic, accountable and sustainable Palestinian state*. <https://south.euneighbours.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/European-Joint-Strategy-2021-2024.pdf>

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ANNEX 5: The methodology used, and its application

1 Methodological Principles

The evaluation was conducted using some basic **methodological principles**, namely:

- A **process approach**. Although the programme consists of a set of activities coordinated according to specific objectives and expected results, the evaluation examined the extent to which ongoing transformation processes (of the administration and public services, on the one hand, and of CSOs, on the other) were accompanied, supported and/or guided through these activities.
- An **approach aimed at recognising the actors involved**. The actions of the initiative under review have involved and involve a heterogeneous set of actors and actors, including entities and organisations, as well as collective actors of an informal nature (such as women's groups and micro-enterprises).
- A **participatory approach**. The active participation of the various actors in the evaluation process was favoured, not only as "sources of information", but also and above all as bearers of different needs, interests and knowledge, relevant to understanding the processes activated by the Programme in their complexity. In fact, the analysis of the above-mentioned criteria constitutes in itself a valid indicator for the measurement of the possible change (complete/partial/missed).
- An **approach based on the reconstruction and analysis of events and factual elements**, rather than on the mere degree of "satisfaction" expressed by the various stakeholders. In the course of the evaluation, therefore, the examination of the degree of satisfaction and opinions expressed by the various stakeholders with respect to the projects was accompanied by the analysis of factual elements (data, infrastructures, etc.) and events that occurred in relation to the planned and implemented activities.
- An **approach based on respect for the principles of 'do no harm'**, human rights, gender equality and *'leave no one behind'*. These principles appear particularly important in Palestine, also in view of the conflict situations and the escalating forms of threats and violence against organisations dealing with gender and GBV issues.

The approach described above **aligned** the evaluation:

- with **international reference standards** and with the **Italian cooperation guidelines on evaluation** (on which the proposing party has conducted revision work in recent years);
- with the principles of **usefulness, credibility, independence, impartiality, transparency, ethics, professionalism, human rights, gender equality** and the *leave-one-behind* principle;
- with the **standards of integrity and respect for civil rules, customs, human rights, gender equality and the 'do no harm' principle**;
- with the principles and practice of the *Human Rights Based Approach* (since rather than service delivery, the team focused on the promotion, recognition and exercise of rights by 'beneficiaries');
- with the *Results-Based Approach*, which involved the analysis of various information sources and data from project documentation.

2 Some methodological aspects of field visits

Any data collection operation in the field, especially if linked to the use of direct or live sources, entails a series of **methodological risks** (for the reliability of the information obtained) and **relational risks** (suspicion and reticence on the part of the interviewer, also due to the character of asymmetry that characterises the interviewer/interviewee relationship or distorting phenomena such as that of the so-called 'social desirability and/or acquiescence', i.e. the tendency of the interviewee to provide answers that meet the interviewer's expectations). If, as far as the reliability of the information is concerned, it was possible to obviate the possible risk by means of **information triangulation** and verification operations through the use of **key informants**, as far as relational difficulties are concerned, the evaluation team resorted to a series of expedients aimed at **eliminating the cultural, social and linguistic barriers** that prevent the establishment of what is defined as a 'communicative contract', i.e. a form of interaction in which the roles, expectations and positions of the actors in the relational process are extremely clear.

The set of measures and agreements described above was made possible thanks to the full involvement of the NGO promoters in the field and, above all, the programme's local partners, on the basis of **four methodological aspects**. These are in particular:

- The evaluation process was conceived as an experience - or rather an opportunity - for *capacity building of the* actors involved;
- In addition to the activities of analysing the initiatives, the activities of *stakeholder involvement and* those of planning the dissemination of the results of the evaluation itself and its 'follow-up', i.e. the implementation of concrete improvement and adaptation measures, were particularly important. In fact, this set of activities should be regarded more as *capacity-building* and institution-building actions than as mere communication actions;
- Finally, **respecting the schedules and agendas of local partners and** institutional representatives was a key aspect of the evaluation team's work.

3 Technical Tools

The evaluation exercise was designed to maximise the broad participation of stakeholders at every stage, including programme staff, partners and key informants, both in person and remotely. To this end, the methodology established a continuous dialogue with all stakeholders involved in the implementation process and created a safe space for sharing opinions, experiences and contributions. The chosen approach was implemented through group meetings and exploratory interviews during the initial phase of the fieldwork; e-mail exchanges; presentations of plans, feedback on field missions and results, and readjustments; an e-mail survey addressed to indirect beneficiaries provided the team with further information; finally, a workshop with indirect and direct beneficiaries provided a means of verifying the main conclusions of the evaluation.

The instruments were initially designed following the standard ones adopted by evaluation studies. The target actors for the semi-structured interviews were defined and the questions were adapted according to the characteristics (central institutions, local authorities and target personnel, partner CSOs), always taking into account the evaluation questions and criteria. At the same time, target groups were sampled (groups of beneficiaries of the training organised by Tawasols, female students benefiting from scholarships and courses at university, groups of women housed or protected in shelters, staff of governorates), taking into account the difficulties of tracing direct beneficiaries. The focus group instruments were then adapted to the characteristics of the beneficiaries.

During the field mission, many of the instruments initially proposed for both the semi-structured interview (ISS) and the focus group (FG) were modified on the basis of the information gathered, in particular taking into account the different status of the components of the different partners (the one entrusted to MoWA, the one entrusted to MoSD, the one implemented by AICS).

The template for the *focus groups* addressed to Tawasols was improved to include data on participants and information on their assigned role; a grid was added for focus groups with CSOs who collaborated directly or indirectly in the implementation of WELOD3 activities; finally, the grid for interviews with CSOs was restructured.

Through the group meetings held daily during the field mission, the evaluation exercise gradually built a shared mindset and allowed the team to consolidate methodologies and approaches, enriching the tools initially available.

The qualitative survey involved an intensive, interview-based approach on various topics to be evaluated (measured) as a *follow-up* of the integrated interventions implemented in the West Bank and with a strong value given by the evaluation team to the free expression of the interviewees. The evaluation covered (a) the budget support component of the government, (b) capacity building activities and (c) awareness-raising activities jointly promoted with civil society organisations.

The survey sought to answer previously established evaluation questions to facilitate the understanding of the elements characterising the development of the programme and the retrieval of substantial information. The information gathered focused on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and feasibility of: (i) the mechanisms put in place to promote best practices in the prevention of violence against women and girls and

in the protection and rehabilitation of women and girls; (ii) the capacity of the most vulnerable groups residing in the intervention areas to access and utilise the proposed services; (iii) the gender approach used.

The **semi-structured interview** (ISS) was used to collect a large amount of information and data. The interview was used to collect key informants' views on various aspects of the activities and topics to be evaluated, in particular their perceptions, understanding and identification of programme-related changes. The objective was to shed light on the "why" and the "how", specifically explaining the results related to the interventions.

The group interviews helped create a dynamic that facilitated collective discussion and reflection and provided an environment that encouraged expression and discussion, even of controversial opinions.

The interview, on the other hand, is an instrument that generates a complex scenario, which is open to interpretation and may lack objectivity. For this reason, it was important to carry out a 'context analysis', seeking parallel sources of verification, which would allow the information and data collected to be observed and confirmed.

The triangulation served to consolidate the reliability of the information gathered.

The **FOCUS GROUP**, as a qualitative survey method, aimed to collect the opinions and perceptions of members of the target community/population on the impact of the interventions. Information and data were collected from target groups of the same interest, selected through simple random sampling techniques according to precise criteria and geographical area and/or category of programme participation (government budget support component or socio-economic improvement component of women victims or survivors of VBG, NGO intervention). Discussions were facilitated by interviewers. Focus groups were organised in the form of discussion workshops between the participants, who had the opportunity to analyse the main aspects of the programme as well as their positioning and influence in the context of the intervention.

In group discussions, the evaluator acted as a moderator of the discussion, listening to the participants' answers, but also observing how the participants interacted and whether they agreed or disagreed on a particular topic. Discussion groups generally had the following characteristics:

- Groups of 4-6 participants;
- Duration about 60 minutes;
- Use of a predefined question guide to guide the discussion;
- Recording of discussions using recorders and/or notes.

The analysis techniques used ranged from the interests/power, influence/power matrix to the *SWOT* (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*) and the *SFPO* (*Success, Failure, Problems, Potentialities, Obstacles*), which was useful for constructing a reflection and exchange matrix for each team and enabling all participants to interpret the information that emerged to develop a 'scan' of the actors. This enabled the team to highlight the strengths and knowledge available, the successes and obstacles or challenges encountered by the programme, categorise problems, find causes, links, responsibilities and provide possible solutions.

The set of tools used is summarised in the table below. Each tool, in its extended form, is listed in Annex 6.

SOURCES	Specific sources	Tools for collecting and analysing information and data
Documentary sources	Documentation on the initiative and its implementation (regular reports, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis grid • Inventory of hindering and facilitating factors that emerged during programme implementation • Directory of actions carried out, actors involved and results achieved under the initiative • List of interested parties • Directory of good practices identified by stakeholders • Directory of legislative/implementative and policy initiatives implemented with the programme's contribution • Directory of coordination activities and synergies between the actions of the initiative and those of other actors (UN-Women, EU) • List of women beneficiaries of Tawasol Centres' activities
	Reports on previous initiatives	
	Reports on the individual activities carried out and reports on the activities carried out by the Italian experts involved in the initiative	
	Records and statistical data on services offered in Tawasol centres	
	Documents, publications and articles produced in the context of the intervention (including <i>social media</i>) and by the organisations involved.	
	Documents and reports on the situation of women's rights in Palestine (UN-Women, EU, UNICEF, etc.).	
	Monitoring and evaluation reports (mid-term evaluation, final evaluation)	
Living sources	AICS representatives	In-depth semi-structured interviews
	Representatives of MoWA, MoSD	In-depth semi-structured interviews
	Tawasol representatives in 7 governorates	In-depth semi-structured interviews
	Representatives of national NGOs working on women's empowerment and gender issues: WCLAC, REFORM, RWWS, MIFTAH, PWWSD and others.	Online semi-structured in-depth interviews In-depth semi-structured interviews
	Representatives of the governorates visited	In-depth semi-structured interviews
	Representatives of relevant international organisations (UN-Women, EU, UNFPA)	In-depth semi-structured interviews
	Representatives of local organisations involved in the centres	Visits Semi-structured online questionnaires
	Women involved in Tawasol centre activities	Focus group discussion Semi-structured questionnaires Visits to initiatives Workshop
Direct observation	Tawasol centre locations	Observation grid
	Economic initiatives of assisted women	

ANNEX 6: The used technical tools

FG Tawsol SCREENING SHEET

WELOD3 Project Evaluation

Questionnaire No.: Governorate:

No	Name	Age	Sites	Education and Work Experience	Signature
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

1. Can you describe the activities you carry out in the Tawasol centre you are employed in?
2. Which activities take up most of your time/what is the workload related to the services provided to support women victims or survivors of GBV or to accompany vulnerable women?
3. What are the criteria used to select the most vulnerable women as beneficiaries of the trainings funded by WELOD3?
4. What benefits the local authority/governorate received thanks to the presence of Tawsol?
5. What benefits the community received thanks to your work/presence within the governorate?
6. What has worked or not for the Tawsol centres? Can you mention your position in terms of influence within the governorate?
7. According to you which should be the role and tasks of Tawsol?

BENEFITS (circle one for each answer)	OPINIONS 1. Satisfactory 2. Moderately satisfied 3. Not satisfied	Why? identify especially in relation to their application (gender and empowerment)
Training 1. Yes2 . No		
Services provided 1. Yes2 . No		
GBV knowledge and awareness		

FGD PARTICIPANT SCREENING SHEET

WELOD3 Project Evaluation

Questionnaire No.: District:

No	Name	Age	Site/Location	Employed/Unemployed/Entrepreneur	Signature
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

In case the group is less than 4 targets, please use this tool

Specific Objective 2: Women SEPC Empowerment and reintegration of WV		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main hindrances/ challenges for Palestinian women to accessing income opportunities/labour market and /or to achieving socio-economic self-sufficiency? How is this project responding to these? 	
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you benefited of other trainings or support from other projects ? if yes, which ones and when ? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the women become more involved in decision-making initiatives/processes at community level? Can you mention the power acquired in the community and your interests regarding the activities proposed by the project? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have women acquired the skills and knowledge expected? What is the main immediate/ tangible benefit produced by the project for the targeted women? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding initiatives and or support provided by Tawsol in your opinion what has worked well and what has worked less? What should Tawsol's role be in supporting women or providing response to women's need? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you in contact or have you started any collaboration with private sector actors ? 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you rate the trainings or guidance received and the service provided by the staff within the Tawasol Centre and by other local administrations? How have you been reached to participate to the trainings or to the other initiatives promoted by the project ? 	

Specific Objective 2: Women SEPC Empowerment and reintegration of WV		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many targets have been able to find a job or start a small business? Have you been enabled to be self-sufficient or to increase well being and/or incomes within the households? Is there any significant change in your life ? According to you are there any changes in social attitudes of community members regarding women ? Has the awareness raised reduced social stigma against women victims of GBV/VAW or contributed to change the existing patriarchal system? 	
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have enough resources/skills/inputs to start or continue income generating activities? Do you have any recommendation to improve the responses/support provided? 	
Cross Cutting Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have men participated in awareness activities? Have other local actors as tribal religious leaders been invited or have participated in awareness activities? 	
Visibility/ Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have you been informed about the activities/initiatives financed under WELOD3? 	

In case the group is > than 4 women		
BENEFITS (circle one for each answer)	OPINIONS 1. Satisfactory 2. Moderately satisfied 3. Not satisfied	Why? identify especially in relation to their application (gender and empowerment)
Training 1. Yes 2. No		
Coaching and/or Other Support Services provided through Tawsol or other administrations involved in GBV 1. Yes 2. No		
Job/entrepreneurship created 1. Yes 2. No		
Awareness		

WELOD3 Project Evaluation

KII for Governorate staff

Overall Objective: Increase the Socio Economic Development Opportunities of Palestinian Women and Contribute to the Application of International Instruments for the Protection of Women Rights

Specific Objective 1: Strengthen the capacities of MoWA, the governorates and the Ministry of social Development(MoSD) in gender mainstreaming and CVAW

Info required	Details	
Date of KII:		
Location (Central or Local - in the latter Governorate, Municipality):		
Institution' Partner:		
Name of interviewee:		
Position/title of interviewee:		
Summary of how COVID-19 affected his/her work during last two years of intervention.		

S.Objective 1: Gender Mainstreaming and CVAW		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which is the position of Tawsol in the institutional organisational chart of the governorate? 	
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any significant partnerships/collaboration you benefited from other donors in the same sector? 	
Effectiveness/ Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the most significant effects/added value brought by the work of Tawsol? What is has worked and what has not worked? What would you Recommend? 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is Relationship of Tawsol with other institutional services/administration? Are there any specific collaboration or coordination in addressing the main populations concerns? 	
Effectiveness/ Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you identify the main needs/priorities of the community? What type of support do you need to strengthen your work/to address those needs? Do the Ministry/government intend to continue or to improve Tawsol's centres or similar services provided? 	
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the visibility has been developed (events, inputs)? Donors, partners,..? 	

WELOD3 Project Evaluation

KII for MoWA and MoSD

Overall Objective: Increase the Socio Economic Development Opportunities of Palestinian Women and Contribute to the Application of International Instruments for the Protection of Women Rights

Specific Objective 1: Strengthen the capacities of MoWA, the governorates and the Ministry of social Development (MoSD) in gender mainstreaming and CVAW

Info required	Details	Example
Date of KII:		
Institution' Partner :		
Name of interviewee:		
Position/title of interviewee:		
Sex of interviewee (m/f):	No. M: No. F:	
Age of interviewees (y.o.):		(e.g., 67, 32, 15.45)
Summary of how COVID-19 affected his/her work during last two years of intervention.		

Start with a general question about: **what are your main duties/roles as institutional officer under the Project?**

S.Objective 1: Gender Mainstreaming and CVAW		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main challenges at political level Palestinian institutions (MoSD or MoWA) are currently facing to protect and uphold women and human rights? How is this project responding to these? 	
Coherence/ synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the other technical and financial partners collaborating with the Palestinian institutions in CVAW? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any institutional initiatives focused on the improvement of legislation/policy regarding GBV, actions of CVAW, gender equality, women empowerment or rights protection? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the type of trainings organised? Why have you chosen to these professional sectors covered by the trainings? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you think this project is raising awareness on the CVAW and on women rights? 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the biggest CHALLENGE you face in your work? What type of support do you need to strengthen your work? Are there 	

S.Objective 1: Gender Mainstreaming and CVAW		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	competencies that need further improvement?	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many referents have been appointed within the Ministry at central and local level in charge of the oversight/monitoring of the project? Have there been any changes of contact persons or substitutions in project coordination on the part of ministries? Or turnover in Towasol? How do you rate the coordination established with the partners? 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have been financed by the resources allocated through the project? Are those resources sufficient to implement what was planned? Are other activities/outputs that should have been financed ? Can you describe the role and members of the Advisory Committee? 	
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you mention any visible effect in boosting gender equality and women empowerment, produced at central and local level within governmental and administrative institutions? Can you mention your position acquired after the realisation within the institutional environment in terms of power/influence? 	
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you see the support provided through the Tawasols a sustainable activity? Do you think it will continue even after the project is done or funds run out? Are there any valuable initiatives promoted where ministries of the SME, private sectors' actors have participated? Are there any governmental commitment aimed at improving the protection/support services to CVAW ? 	
Cross Cutting Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any significant partnerships/collaboration promoted with other institutions/administrations (including security policy) aimed at CVAW and/or promoting women empowerment? 	
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the visibility has been developed (events, inputs)? Donors, partners,..? Do you have a C&V strategy/plan? 	

WELOD3 Project Evaluation

KII for NGOs staff partners

Overall Objective: Increase the Socio Economic Development Opportunities of Palestinian Women and Contribute to the Application of International Instruments for the Protection of Women Rights

Specific Objective 2: Strengthen the process of women economic, political, social and cultural empowerment and, together, fight gender based violence by promoting the reintegration into society of women who have experiences violence

Info required	Details	Example
Date of KII:		
Location (Central or Local - in the latter Governorate, Municipality):		
NGO' Partner :		
Name of interviewee:		
Position/title of interviewee:		
Sex of interviewee (m/f):	No. M: No. F:	
Summary of how COVID-19 affected his/her work during last two years of intervention.		

Start with a general question about: **Please define the main intervention of your organisation under this project**

Specific Objective 2: Women SEPC Empowerment and reintegration of WVW		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please describe to what extent this project responded to the needs and priorities of target women. Please explain the type of interventions/initiatives/policy reform the project undertook to respond to these needs and priorities 	
Coherence/ synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have your organisation benefited from other funds of AICS in Palestine to implement projects addressing GBV and women economic empowerment? Please provide examples and locations of intervention 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project contributed to increasing women's participation in decision making and leadership processes 	
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the main immediate/ tangible benefit produced by your intervention in promoting social transformation and in breaking social stereotypes concerning women's role in the community? 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has WELOD established a system/coordination mechanism among all partners? 	

Specific Objective 2: Women SEPC Empowerment and reintegration of WV		
OECD CRITERIA	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the challenges your organisation faced in the realisation of this project. What are the procedures you have taken to overcome these challenges (at the organisational and community levels) 	
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the training conducted under the project contributed to increase women's skills/professional competences? Have the job opportunities for women increased? To what extent has the project contributed to increasing women's access to protection services and their ability to exercise these rights? 	
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your organisation involved in further initiatives or benefited from additional funds to pursue the activities initiated under the WELOD? Do you think that the protection services/guidance support under the responsibility of the institutions will continue even after the project is done or funds run out? Do you have specific plan/strategy to ensure the sustainability of the project outcome at the end of the funding cycle? Can you give an example 	
Cross Cutting Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have men been associated to activities aimed at improving women empowerment? If yes, how men have been involved or participated to the activities your organisation have implemented? Are there any training addressed to men? 	
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the visibility has been developed (events, inputs)? Donors, institutions, NGOs, CSOs? 	

ANNEX 7: Budget transfers by programme component

Programme Component	Date of transfer	Amount transferred
Budget support (1st tranche)	26 November 2014	€1,000,000
Budget support (2nd tranche)	12 September 2018	€700,000
On-site funds (1st year)	27 February 2014	€550,000
On-site funds (2nd year)	13 November 2016	€260,000
On-site funds (3rd year)	14 November 2018	€280,000
Expert Fund (reallocated to on-site funds)	21 November 2019	€16,684.83

