



The Implementation of the Essential Services Package  
(ESP) for Women and Girls Subject to Violence in the  
English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean:  
Implementation Guidance Note

UNFPA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE CARIBBEAN (SROC)

# The Implementation of the Essential Services Package (ESP) for Women and Girls Subject to Violence in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean -

## Implementation Guidance Note

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The UNFPA Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean (SROC) serves 22 countries and overseas territories in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. UNFPA promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. It does so by promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and equity and by promoting and supporting the use of population data in the formulation of national policies and programmes.

The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and not necessarily the views of UNFPA or the Spotlight Initiative. This research was prepared by Megan Denise Smith (Independent Consultant) and Mariana Santoyo Bahamón (Regional Gender Based Violence Specialist - UNFPA SROC) with support by Nora Nyeko (Independent Consultant) and Girum Beyene (GBV Information Management Officer - UNFPA).

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# 1. Introduction - ESP Implementation Guidance Note

During the in-person meeting of the ESP Caribbean Community of Practice (CoP), Standing Members agreed on a set of key gaps and priorities for the region. One of the main gaps that countries have reported is the lack of standard templates and technical guidance around the assessments necessary to plan for the implementation of the ESP in their countries, a lack of knowledge and guidance in the process, and a lack of technical capacity in those individuals conducting the processes. As such, one of the main priorities agreed upon by all Standing Members, was to develop a standard methodology and resource package available at the regional level, to support the planning and implementation of the ESP at the national levels, including technical assistance throughout the process.

This Implementation Guidance Note provides an overview to this resource package for the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean as well as a structured approach to support operationalization of the ESP among member states.<sup>1</sup> Implementation of the resource package and relevant training should be led by relevant national gender machineries and country-level institutions involved in delivering essential services to women and girls subject to violence, including police, justice, health, social services, coordinating bodies and women's rights NGOs and CSOs. Given that this guide will be used by different service providers and sectors, the proposed tools and methodologies may need to be further adapted depending on the implementing country context.

State and non-state organizations are encouraged to adopt a comprehensive and coordinated multi-sectoral approach, which has been shown to be more effective in responding to violence against women and girls than a fragmented approach. Successful implementation of the essential services requires action at all levels of government as well as participation by civil society organizations. For that reason, this guide includes implementation activities at both the national and local levels and provides specific guidance and advice building on the identified challenges among ESP implementing and non-implementing countries across the Caribbean region. This Guidance Note will continue to be further refined building from the lessons learned from the pilot phase of the roll-out of the ESP Resource Package throughout 2023 and in coordination with the ESP Caribbean CoP, currently led by UNFPA and CARICOM.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Essential Services Package (ESP)

The United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services (ESP) for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, exists to support the provision of and greater access to a coordinated set of essential and quality multi-sectoral services for all women and girls who have experienced GBV. The ESP programme is the result of a general consensus on essential services for women and girls

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<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive introduction and overview to the ESP, please refer to the full package. UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC (2015) [Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence](#).

who have experienced GBV, and the core elements of response to be provided through the health, social services, policing and justice sectors, forming a multisectoral coordinated response to addressing GBV. The programme also includes guidance for the coordination and implementation of the ESP.

The guidelines for each core element of the essential services are designed to ensure a quality response to violence against women and girls. It is key to highlight that the way in which essential services are implemented will vary from one country to another. Some countries may already have the described services in place; others may need to adapt existing services or progressively implement new services, or take additional measures to meet these standards. It is critical that each country has a plan in place to achieve identified standards, and to ensure that measurement and accountability processes and mechanisms are established.

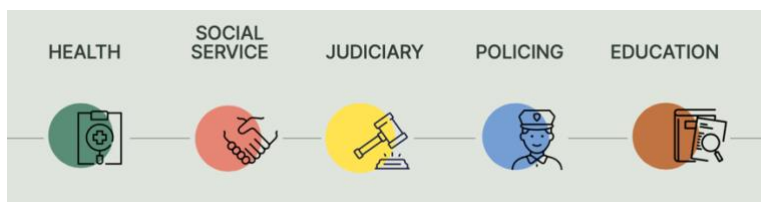
Furthermore, government commitment to addressing GBV is critical to achieving the goals of the ESP. The international obligation to exercise due diligence requires states to establish effective measures to prevent, investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women. This includes effective means to respond to each case of violence, as well as address the structural causes and consequences of the violence, by ensuring comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, gender sensitive justice systems and police, available health and social services, awareness-raising activities and ensuring the quality of all measures in place to ensure that services are being delivered and are of the required quality.

## 1.2. The ESP Framework

Research and practice suggest that the manner in which services are provided has a significant impact on their effectiveness. Key to responding to violence against women and girls and maintaining women and girls' safety and well-being is an understanding of the gendered nature of the violence, its causes and consequences and providing services within a culture of women's empowerment, which assist women and girls to consider the range of choices available to them and support their decisions. In delivering quality essential services, countries must consider the overriding principles that underpin and support the delivery of all essential services and the foundational elements which must be in place.

These principles and foundational elements are reflected in common characteristics and activities that cut across the health, social services, police and justice sectors and coordination and governance mechanisms. The ESP provides a framework of principles which underpin the delivery of all essential services. These are characteristics that describe a range of activities and approaches common across all sectors, and which support effective and functional service delivery. The essential services and actions establish the guidelines required for services to secure the human rights, safety and well-being of any woman, girls or child who experiences intimate partner violence and or non-partner sexual violence.

Essential services are grouped into **four sector-specific areas**: 1.) Health, 2.) Justice and policing, 3.) Social Services and 4.) Education<sup>2</sup>



They are underpinned by a **fifth element**: essential actions for the coordination and governance of coordination which is a cross-cutting focus among all sectors.

### ESP Framework Diagram – Principles and Common Characteristics

| PRINCIPLES              |                                   |   |                       |  |                            |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|
| A rights based approach | Victim/survivor centered approach | Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment | Safety is a paramount | Culturally and age appropriate and sensitive | Perpetrator accountability |

| COMMON CHARACTERISTICS |               |              |                 |                   |                                      |  |                         |   |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| Availability           | Accessibility | Adaptability | Appropriateness | Prioritize safety | Informed consent and confidentiality | Data collection and information management | Effective communication | Linking with other sectors and agencies through referral and coordination |

### ESP Framework – Essential Services and Actions

| ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND ACTIONS  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| HEALTH  | JUSTICE AND POLICING  | SOCIAL SERVICES  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification of survivors of intimate partner violence</li> <li>2. First-line support</li> <li>3. Care of injuries and urgent medical treatment</li> <li>4. Sexual assault examination and care</li> <li>5. Mental health assessment and care</li> <li>6. Documentation (medico-legal)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Prevention</li> <li>8. Initial contact</li> <li>9. Assessment/investigation</li> <li>10. Pre-trial processes</li> <li>11. Trial processes</li> <li>12. Perpetrator accountability and reparations</li> <li>13. Post-trial processes</li> <li>14. Safety and protection</li> <li>15. Assistance and support</li> <li>16. Communication and information</li> <li>17. Justice sector coordination</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Crisis information</li> <li>19. Crisis counselling</li> <li>20. Help lines</li> <li>21. Safe accommodations</li> <li>22. Material and financial aid</li> <li>23. Creation, recovery, replacement of identity documents</li> <li>24. Legal and rights information, advice and representation, including in plural legal systems</li> </ol> |

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the Education sector is a new edition to the ESP Resource Package – the Caribbean will be the first region to integrate the education sector within the ESP. Please reach out directly to UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Office for specific resources and tools [uniceflac@unicef.org](mailto:uniceflac@unicef.org)

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>25. Psychosocial support and counselling</p> <p>26. Women-centered support</p> <p>27. Children's services for any child affected by violence</p> <p>28. Community information, education and community outreach</p> <p>29. Assistance towards economic Independence, recovery and autonomy</p> |
|--|--|---|

### Coordination and the Governance of Coordination:

| COORDINATION AND GOVERNANCE OF COORDINATION   |  |
|---|--|
| NATIONAL LEVEL: ESSENTIAL ACTIONS   | LOCAL LEVEL: ESSENTIAL ACTIONS   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Law and policy making</li> <li>2. Appropriation and allocation of resources</li> <li>3. Standard setting for establishment of local level coordinated responses</li> <li>4. Inclusive approaches to coordinated responses</li> <li>5. Facilitate capacity development of policy makers and other decision-makers on coordinated responses to VAWG</li> <li>6. Monitoring and evaluation of coordination at national and local levels</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of formal structures for local coordination and governance of coordination</li> <li>2. Implementation of coordination and governance of coordination</li> </ol> |

| FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS                         |   |                        |                                    |   |                           |
|---|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Comprehensive legislation and legal framework | Governance oversight and accountability | Resource and financing | Training and workforce development | Gender sensitive policies and practices | Monitoring and evaluation |

#### Availability:

- Service delivery must be created, maintained and developed in a way that guarantee women and girl's access to comprehensive services without discrimination in the whole territory of the State, including remote, rural and isolated areas.
- Services are delivered to reach all populations, including the most excluded, remote, vulnerable and marginalized without any form of discrimination regardless of their individual circumstances and life experiences of women and girls including their age, identity, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and language preferences
- Service delivery is organized to provide women and girls with continuity of care across the network of services and over their life cycle.
- Consider innovative service delivery to broaden coverage of service delivery such as mobile health clinics and courts as well as the creative use of modern IT solutions when feasible.

#### Accessibility:

- Women and girls are able to access services without undue financial or administrative burden. This means services should be affordable, administratively easy to access, and in certain cases, such as police, emergency health and social services, free of charge.



- Services must be delivered as far as possible, in a way that considers the language needs of the user.
- Service delivery procedures and other information about essential services are available in multiple formats (for example, oral, written, electronically) and user-friendly and in plain language to maximize access and meet the needs of different target groups.

#### **Adaptability:**

- Services understand and respond to the individual circumstances and needs of each victim / survivor.
- A comprehensive range of services are provided to allow women and girls to have options to services that best meet their individual circumstances.

#### **Appropriateness:**

- Efforts are made to reduce secondary victimization, for example, minimize the number of times she has to relay her story; the number of people she must deal with; and ensuring trained personnel are available.
- Women and girls are supported to fully understand their options.
- Women and girls are empowered to feel able to help herself and to ask for help.
- Women and girls' decisions are respected after ensuring she fully understands the options available to her.
- Services should be delivered in a way that responds to her needs and concerns without intruding on her autonomy.

#### **Risk Assessment and Safety Planning:**

- Services use risk assessment and management tools specifically developed for responding to intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.
- Services regularly and consistently assess the individual risks for each woman and girl.
- Services use a range of risk management options, solutions and safety measures to support the safety of women and girls.
- Service providers should ensure that women and girls receive a strengths-based, individualized plan that includes strategies for risk management.
- Services must work with all agencies including health, social services, justice and policing services to coordinate risk assessment and management approaches.

#### **Effective Communication and Participation by Stakeholders in design, implementation and assessment of services:**

- Service providers must be non-judgmental, empathetic and supportive.
- Women and girls must have the opportunity to tell her story, be listened to, and have her story accurately recorded and to be able to express her needs and concerns according to their abilities, age, intellectual maturity and evolving capacity.
- Service provider must validate her concerns and experiences by taking what she says seriously, not blame or judge her.
- Service providers must provide information and counselling that helps her to make her own decisions.

#### **Informed Consent and Confidentiality:**

- Services have a code of ethics for the exchange of information (in accordance with existing legislation), including what information will be shared, how it will be shared and who it will be shared with.
- Service providers working directly with women and girls are informed about, and comply with, the code of ethics.
- Information relating to individual women and girls is treated confidentially, and stored securely.
- Women and girls are supported to fully understand their options and the implications of disclosure.
- Service providers understand, and comply with, their responsibilities with respect to confidentiality.

#### **Data Collection and Information Management:**

- Ensure there is a documented and secure system for the collection, recording and storing of all information and data.
- All information about women and girls who are accessing services is stored securely including: client files, legal and medical reports, and safety plans.
- Ensure accurate data collection by supporting staff to understand and use the data collection systems, and providing them adequate time to enter data in data collection systems.
- Ensure data are only shared using agreed protocols between organizations.
- Promote the analysis of data collection to assist in understanding the prevalence of violence, trends in using the essential services, evaluation of existing services and inform prevention measures.

#### **Linking with Other Sectors and Agencies through Referral and Coordination:**

- Procedures between services for information sharing and referral are consistent, known by agency staff, and communicated clearly to women and girls.
- Services have mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of referrals processes.
- Services refer to child specific services as required and appropriate.

## 2. The ESP Implementation Process

The overall process outlines 10 steps in the implementation of the ESP. Please note this is not always a linear process to follow and several steps may need to be revisited throughout the project inception and implementation phases.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>STEP 1:</b><br>Document review (Assessment)                          | interviews, and focus group discussions<br>(Assessment/ Implementation) *                    |
| <b>STEP 2:</b><br>Identification of key stakeholders<br>(Assessment)    | <b>STEP 5:</b><br>Discussions and validations around the<br>FGDs (Assessment/Implementation) |
| <b>STEP 3:</b><br>Design of data collection instruments<br>(Assessment) | <b>STEP 6:</b><br>Developing an Action Plan<br>(Assessment)                                  |
| <b>STEP 4:</b><br>Collection of data via questionnaires,                | <b>STEP 7:</b><br>Validating the Action Plan (Assessment)                                    |

### STEP 8:

Capacity-building efforts for the implementation of the Action Plan (Assessment)

### STEP 10:

Monitoring and Evaluation (implementation)

### STEP 9:

Implementation of the Action Plan by the four sectors (implementation)

*\* Focused on existing structures and systems, quality of services, resource availability and requirements, gaps, survivor's knowledge on their rights and services available.*

## 2.1 The ESP Resource Package for the Caribbean

| A. ESP Resource Package for the English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean: Overview of Tools |  |                                    |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Tool  | Purpose  | Notes                              |
| <b>0. ESP Resource Package Implementation Guidance Note</b>                             | This guidance note provides an introduction and overview to the toolkit and companion training modules   | Baseline and Implementation Phase  |
| <b>1. Assessments</b>   | <p>The assessments will help the team to identify relevant services and key stakeholders at the national level. Both tools are designed to be used to facilitate interviews with service providers (not communities). It helps to identify contextual gaps, challenges and opportunities in GBV multisectoral services at the national level. The assessment folder of tools includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Rapid Assessment Tool<sup>3</sup></li> <li>2) Comprehensive Assessment Tool</li> <li>3) Service Mapping Matrix</li> <li>4) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Tool</li> <li>5) Key Informant Interview (KII) Tool</li> <li>6) Support for Data Collection (Includes: Consent Form, Activity Summary Form, Data Collector Sign-In Sheet and Post-Study Evaluation Form)</li> </ol> | Baseline and Implementation Phases |
| <b>2. Implementation Checklists</b>   | Sector-specific checklists to guide implementation: 1.) <i>Coordination and Governance</i> , 2.) <i>Health</i> , 3.) <i>Social Services</i> , 4.) <i>Justice and Policing</i> . These checklists are designed to provide general guidance in the development of a joint action plan for ESP implementation and identify areas of coordination between key stakeholders.  | Baseline and Implementation Phases |

<sup>3</sup> The rapid tool can be used for emergency settings and the comprehensive tool in development/non-emergency settings. Refer to the powerpoint training "Planning an Assessment."

|   |   |                                    |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>3. Service Guidelines</b>                          | Sector-specific guidelines crucial for the implementation process of services. Includes: 1.) <i>Coordination and Governance</i> , 2.) <i>Health</i> , 3.) <i>Social Services</i> .  | Baseline Phase                     |
| <b>4. Service Quality Assessments</b>                 | Similar to the service guidelines, these assessments can support stock-taking of the quality of existing services at different stages. Can be conducted at any point to assess service gaps and monitor progress. 1.) <i>Case Management</i> , 2.) <i>Health</i> , 3.) <i>Safe Houses</i> , 4.) <i>Safe Spaces/One Stop Shops (non-medical service points)</i>  | Baseline and Implementation Phase  |
| <b>5. Stakeholder Presentation Summary Powerpoint</b> | This presentation template will help the team communicate the overall objectives of the ESP and the initial findings from the baseline/endline assessment to key stakeholders. This should be conducted prior to the development of the Joint Action Plan.  | Baseline Phase                     |
| <b>6. ESP Costing Tools</b>                           | These tools will help the team to develop a national costed action plan for the proposed intervention based off the assessment findings. There are three sector-specific costing tools: 1.) <i>Coordination and Governance of Coordination</i> , 2.) <i>Justice and Policing</i> and 3.) <i>Social Services</i> . Each sector costing tool is divided by “infrastructure in place” or “No infrastructure in place” <i>Note: the costing tool for the Health sector is currently under development by WHO.</i> | Baseline Phase                     |
| <b>7. Joint Action Plan Tool</b>                      | Joint multisectoral action plan template for guiding priority actions for ESP implementation, including roles and responsibilities. Can be used to guide multisectoral coordination meetings and should be based off of the assessment findings.  | Baseline and Implementation Phases |
| <b>8. Proposal Templates</b>                          | Templates include 1.) <i>Concept Note Template</i> , 2.) <i>Proposal Template</i> 3.) <i>Logframe Template</i> and 4.) <i>Budget Template</i> (to be completed based on the ESP Costing Tool estimations)-  | Baseline phase                     |
| <b>9. GBV Focal Point Terms of Reference (ToR)</b>    | This provides a template of a model ToR for a Gender / GBV Focal Point role including key roles and responsibilities in implementing the ESP that can be adapted.   | Baseline Phase                     |
| <b>10. Monitoring Tool</b>                            | An example of a monitoring tool that can be used to capture progress on implementation, key challenges, bottlenecks, best practices and other lessons learned.  | Baseline and Implementation Phases |

| <b>B. ESP Resource Package for the English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean: Overview of Training</b> |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>Training Module</b>  | <b>Purpose</b> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. GBV Core Concepts</b>                     | This module provides the foundation to the training in the ESP and includes core concepts on gender, GBV, multisectoral service provision, GBV guiding principles, responding to disclosures and GBV in crises/emergencies.  |
| <b>2. ESP Introduction</b>                      | This module provides the introduction and background to the ESP including key standards for Health, Justice and Policing and Social Services, the coordination and governance of coordination, the ESP and GBV Minimum Standards in Emergencies in Practice and a brief snapshot of the ESP Resource Package for the English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean.   |
| <b>3. Overview to the ESP Resource Package</b>  | This module introduces all of the tools in the ESP Resource Package for the English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean including: Assessments, Implementation Checklists, Service Guidelines and Audits, Service Mapping, Costing the ESP, Joint Action Planning, developing a Proposal / Concept Note and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)   |
| <b>4. Ethical Approaches to Data Collection</b> | This module provides an introduction to understand what is ethical research in practice, how to obtain informed consent and confidentiality, understand risks and benefits in data collection, explain the importance of informed consent and participatory approaches. Learning how to conduct facilitation and note-taking in interviews, FGDs and participatory exercises and how to conduct principled research and ensure do-no-harm in practice. |
| <b>6. Referral Pathways</b>                     | Provides a more detailed overview of GBV referral pathways, the role of GBV Focal Points, how to use the 5W service mapping tool and keeping the referral pathways updated.  |
| <b>Handouts</b>                                 | Includes: Training Agenda Example, GBV Tree Exercise, Examples for Facilitation, Cheat Sheet for Data Collection, Handout for Safe Referrals (Constant Companion and GBV Pocket Guide), Post-Test, and Training Evaluation Form)   |

| <b>C. ESP Resource Package for the English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean: Overview of Support Material</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Tool</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>  |
| <b>1. Technical Resources</b>   | Includes the global ESP resource package, guidance on safe shelters for the English and Dutch Speaking Caribbean, and example of GBV SOPs   |
| <b>2. Risk Assessments</b>  | Includes global resources on risk analysis in GBV programming   |
| <b>3. Referral Pathways</b>   | Includes examples of referral pathways and systems specific to different countries in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean region   |
| <b>4. Emergencies</b>   | Includes support material and resources on GBV in emergencies as well as guidance on other emergency-related activities such as dignity kits and GBV-SRH guidance   |
| <b>5. Training and Capacity-Building</b>  | Additional training and capacity-building support in GBV for different service providers working in health, case management, etc. additional materials for training in Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), GBV in Emergencies and |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Coordination. Includes training materials for in-person training and resources/links to online training for service providers. |
|--|--|

## 2.2 Steps to Implementing the ESP

This guide focuses on the fundamental steps required for effective implementation of the ESP that may vary depending on existing legal, social and economic cultures and institutional capacities of each member state. The proposed activities may require further detailed actions at the country level. Such activities will likely overlap within and between the different steps. Within each step, multiple issues will need to be addressed, including organizational characteristics, funding, and inter-agency coordination.

Activities are characterized between two prongs: 1) the enabling environment and 2) the implementation process at the local level. Each is dependent on the other and neither can be effective without the other. While the steps for each prong are set out in a logical sequence, the complexity of the process means that there is no single correct way to achieve successful implementation. It describes the broad enabling factors that are likely to impact the implementation and sustainment of the delivery of these essential services as well as how to develop an action plan for implementation.

## 2.3 An Enabling Environment

For the ESP to become available for routine delivery to all GBV survivors, there must be an enabling environment that supports implementation. The State and its institutions need to address institutional structural barriers and put in place the elements to support an enabling environment: laws, policies, budgets, capable service providers, informed service demanders and quality controls. These are the foundational elements that support the essential services and high-quality service delivery. Best Practice: If a country does not yet comply with all the requested elements that qualify as an enabling environment, this will be reflected in the assessment phase, and a corresponding work plan will be recommended so the country can advance in ensuring the enabling environment to fully implement the ESP.

### **Comprehensive Legislation and Legal Frameworks - Recommended Strategies:**

1. Promote and integrate the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and the promotion of women's empowerment in all laws.
2. Ensure laws are guided by the principles of human rights-based, victim / survivor-centered approach and ensuring offender accountability.
3. Cover all forms of violence against women, using broad definitions that are aligned with human rights standards:
  - a) Criminal law framework that criminalizes all forms of violence against women, reflecting the reality of violence women face, including criminalizing breaches of civil protection orders.

- b) Criminal, civil, family and administrative law frameworks that ensure effective prevention, protection, prosecution, punishment and provisions of redress and reparations, including a civil protection order.
- 4. Respond to and address the root causes of violence against women, especially the historical inequity between women and men.
- 5. Impose a statutory obligation on the institutions to provide coordinated and integrated services and provide clear mandates for service providing institutions.
- 6. Consider specific legislative provisions for specialized units, training, oversight and monitoring mechanisms and a dedicated funding mechanism.
- 7. Provide for a law reform process that includes effective and transparent consultation:
  - a) Promote a broad consultation with all relevant agencies and civil society, including victim/survivors' organizations.
  - b) Promote the use of evidence-based research to inform law reform.
  - c) Develop information dissemination plans / legal literacy campaigns to ensure women are aware of their rights in law, services available and remedies.

#### **Gender-Responsive Policies and Practices- Recommended Strategies:**

1. Ensure a comprehensive policy framework that covers different levels such as national, multi-sectoral, sector specific and institutional.
2. Incorporate a common understanding of violence against women that is victim / survivor-centered and informed by guiding human rights principles and the need for offender accountability.
3. Articulate clearly the internal institutional factors such as staffing, protocols, procedures and organizational culture as well as organizational relationships required for collaboration and coordination
4. Integrate policies on violence against women into the broader policy commitments to gender equality and human rights.
5. Integrate sectoral and coordination policies into a National Policy and Action Plan to eliminate violence against women.
6. Develop policy commitments by:
  - a) Communicating the policy to all stakeholders
  - b) Considering incentives to get buy-in for inter-agency collaboration;
  - c) Specifying a key role for victims / survivors and their advocates.

#### **Resources and Financing - Recommended Strategies:**

1. Promote and integrate principles of gender-responsive planning and budgeting in order to foster the generation of national plans and policies that adequately meet the needs of women and girls.
2. Emphasize the active participation of civil society and gender advocates in policy planning and budgetary processes as a means of learning about the needs of women and girls, and work to include them in the laws, policies and budgets designed to positively impact their lives.
3. Understand the impact that public financial management systems and fiscal policies have on gender equality.
4. Designate adequate and sustained financial resources to prevent and respond to violence against women.
5. Ensure adequate and appropriate infrastructure and services are accessible, available and adaptable to all women and girls living in the State, including rural and remote areas.

6. Consider the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms or interdisciplinary units to design holistic strategies that understand gender equality and women's empowerment across all areas of State action.

#### **Training and Capacity Development - Recommended Strategies:**

1. Set standards for workplace practices, including the necessary capacity of the service providers in terms of knowledge and skills.
2. Increase the diversity of the workforce, including in terms of gender, ethnicity and language.
3. Establish policies on promoting gender equality within those institutions responsible for providing essential services, especially at the senior decision-making level, including measures to recruit, retain and promote women where they are not adequately represented.
4. Set standards in training of service providers based on good practices in each sector and on coordination, including partnering with women's organizations and inter-agency training.
5. Provide opportunities for service providers at various stages of their career (from intake, continuing training and advancement, peer-to-peer exchanges) to build their skills and expertise and to ensure their knowledge and skills remain up to date.
6. Promote specialization and multi-disciplinary teams.

#### **Governance, Oversight and Accountability - Recommended Strategies:**

1. Promote governance structures that contribute to increasing the confidence of women in mechanisms, processes and institutions, facilitating their participation and addressing gender-related barriers to their access.
2. Develop opportunities and capacities of women to influence the wide range of ways in which political social and administrative structures of society can ensure gender equality and women's access, including through working with women's groups and social movements.
3. Promote women's participation in both government (legislative politics, courts, administrative agencies, the military) and in institutions of civil society (movements, groups, non-governmental organizations).
4. Enhance existing oversight mechanism (e.g., internal and external) to integrate a mandate to cover gender equality and elimination of violence against women.
5. Promote a broad range of accountability mechanisms within and between each sector, including victim complaint mechanisms, monitoring by an independent body and/or civil society.
6. Enhance accountability mechanisms with participation by stakeholders in design, implementation and assessment of services.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation - Recommended Strategies:**

1. Set standards for gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation including indicators, data collection, analysis and reporting, methodology, schedules for collecting and reporting data, including qualitative and quantitative data.
2. Develop guidelines and structures at the national level to support good gendered monitoring of service delivery at the local level.
3. Revise existing administrative data collection mechanisms to track provision of and access to essential services on ending violence against women, as well as outcomes/results of the provision of such services.
4. Create mechanisms that can feed results from the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the essential services into recommendations for improvement to other enabling elements, such as law reform and policy development.
5. Ensure that results of monitoring and evaluation are broadly available, disaggregated by relevant characteristics (i.e., age, ethnicity, location and others to be agreed in each context), and protect confidentiality of victims / survivors.
6. Ensure gender balance in any external data collection, monitoring and evaluation processes.



## 2.4 Implementing the ESP

With the enabling factors in place, the actual process of implementing the ESP is carried out at the local level where survivors access services. Although implementation may be carried out by a group of providers of a particular essential service, or even by a single provider of a service, delivery of such services is much more effective if carried out as part of a coordinated multi-sectoral response. In addition to service providers, the coordinated response may include other stakeholders. The implementation process is not conducted just once to create the essential services, but aspects of the process are conducted continually or periodically as circumstances require to ensure that services are working to keep women safe and hold offenders accountable.

### A. IDENTIFYING THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the essential services requires identification of a specific entity that is responsible for ensuring that the services are provided in a way that effectively addresses violence against women and girls. The entity may be a separate coordinating body or a function within a stakeholder sector. What is important is that the entity charged with this responsibility includes all relevant sectors in the response. While some coordination may take place informally based on existing relationships, a sustainable response requires formalized agreements regarding the role and accountability of each stakeholder in carrying out implementation of the essential services.

The implementation entity is responsible for guiding the implementation of essential services. It sets goals and objectives for providing the services and holds each sector accountable for ensuring that the guidelines for each of the services are followed. In addition, the

#### Relevant Tools:

- Key Informant Interview Tool
- Service Guidelines
- Implementation Checklists
- Service Quality Assessments

implementation entity works to ensure that appropriate resources are available and that obstacles are addressed and necessary corrections made. It facilitates cooperation, coordination and collaboration among the essential services providers and other stakeholders and ensures that voices of vulnerable and marginalized populations are heard.

#### Recommended Strategies - Possible Make-Up of Implementing Entity:

1. Multi-sectoral partnership comprised of providers of essential services and other stakeholders.
2. Balance of government officials and civil society organizations.

3. NGOs /victim / survivor advocates should play a key role. This is important because women's rights NGOs often operate as an entry point for victims / survivors seeking services and continue to work with them to address the violence. Thus, they are in the best position not only to understand victims / survivors' needs but to represent those needs to other service providers and promote a comprehensive, effective response to the violence.
  4. A central body may be responsible for implementation (e.g., one-stop centers) or each sector may carry out its services independently with a separate group responsible for coordination.
  5. A new entity may be created for the purpose of implementing coordination among providers and other stakeholders or an existing entity (e.g., women's rights NGO) may be given responsibility for implementing coordination.
  6. Members of the implementation body should share a victim/survivor-centered philosophy and apply human rights standards of victim/survivor safety and offender accountability.
  7. Members of the implementation body should enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreeing to a victim/survivor-centered philosophy, goals and objectives. The MOU should incorporate a shared understanding of violence against women and transparent standards and expectations for each participating sector.
- Best Practice:** In several contexts, particularly in the Caribbean, the National Gender Machineryes are the main entity responsible for overseeing the implementation of the ESP, and they get technical support from UNFPA, UN Women and other UN Agencies.

## B. ASSESSMENTS

For implementation of essential services to meet the needs of women and girls who have been subject to violence, it is important to conduct an assessment to establish knowledge of the existing situation and identify gaps in the available services as well as the factors that provide for an enabling environment. Assessment is necessary to identify needs, the existing capacity to meet those needs, needs that are not being met, and establishing goals and objectives for meeting the unmet needs.

GBV survivors across the world have diverse needs and face different risks. It is imperative that policy makers, civil society organizations and those wishing to engage survivors learn about their experiences with systems intervenors and integrate lessons learned into their work, as well as incorporate survivor voices into systemic reform. The impact of decisions and actions taken by government, including health, police, justice, social services agencies profoundly affect survivors' lives. The input and voices of survivors should be meaningfully incorporated into policies,

### Relevant Tools:

- Rapid Assessment Tool
- Comprehensive Assessment Tool
- Service Mapping Matrix
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Tool
- Key Informant Interview (KII) Tool
- Implementation Checklists
- Service Guidelines
- Service Quality Assessments

practices and procedures that are developed as part of VAWG response, including implementation of the Essential Services Package. Through focus groups or interviews, survivors can describe their needs and the nuance of how a policy and/or practice impacts their lives.

#### **Assessments – Recommended Strategies:**

1. Consult with stakeholders, including those who are not part of the implementation entity.
2. Determine whether enabling factors are in place.
3. Identify existing government agencies, roles and mandates.
4. Identify existing civil society providers and their capacity.
5. Assess quantity and quality of existing essential services.
6. Determine required and available resources.
7. Analyze and identify gaps: determine the need for new, additional, and improved services.
8. Assess victims / survivors' knowledge of their right to services, their experience in using existing services and their capacity to demand services.
9. Assess need for services based on community demographics.

**Best Practice:** It is always crucial to map existing reports and previously conducted assessments to understand GBV risks, trends and service gaps. GBV prevalence data is not required to design GBV response services or interventions to support survivors/victims. In the absence of data or information, you can also reach out to the Caribbean CoP for support or collect your own data using existing tools in the resource package such as the service mapping tool, safety audits, FGDs, etc.

### **C. DEVELOPING AND COSTING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Developing, costing and carrying out the implementation plan is at the core of the implementation process. The result should be the availability of sufficient essential services that carry out good practices in responding to the needs of women and girls who are subject to violence. It is key to note that this informs the development of the joint action plan which should be informed by the assessment, ensuring an evidence-based and contextually specific approach to ESP implementation. The concept note and proposal templates can help frame activities to mobilise resources with potential donors. Successful interventions have included the Spotlight Initiative with European Union (EU) funding and the case of St. Lucia, who mobilised their own resources outside of the Spotlight programme through identifying key gaps and proactively proposing activities to UNFPA and other relevant UN agencies and coordination mechanisms to identify possible funding sources.

#### **Relevant Tools:**

- Stakeholder Presentation Summary Powerpoint
- Joint Action Plan Tool
- ESP Costing Tool – Coordination and the Governance of Coordination
- Costing Tool – Justice and Policing
- Costing Tool – Social Services
- Concept Note Template
- Proposal Template

#### **Developing and Costing the Implementation Plan – Recommended Strategies:**

1. Refine goals and objectives.
2. Clearly identify tasks, time frame, roles and responsibilities.
3. Create a process for resolving disputes among coordinating entities.
4. Identify funding requirements, funding sources and apply for funding.
5. Identify required infrastructure and how to obtain it.
6. Identify human resources, including necessary training for service providers and how to secure and/or train required providers.
7. Prioritize service delivery based on evidence of community need.
8. Create a detailed implementation plan based on elements set out in the relevant sector appendix.
9. Disseminate implementation plan to service providers and others, as appropriate.
10. Make technical assistance and resources available to service providers to carry out implementation plan.
11. Promote coordination among service providers.
12. Raise public awareness of availability of Essential Services and how to access them.

#### **D. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ESP Implementation**

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are necessary for accountability, essential to determining strengths and weaknesses of services being provided, and critical to identifying gaps and needed changes. M&E provides information to justify funding requests, and to advocate for stronger laws and more effective implementation of laws and policies on violence against women and girls. Collecting and reporting both qualitative and quantitative data is important, as well as ensuring that the data is interpreted correctly. For example, increased reporting of domestic violence does not necessarily indicate an increase in domestic violence, but it may be the result of a greater willingness of victims to report the violence.

#### **Relevant Tools:**

- ESP Joint Action Plan Tool
- Monitoring Tool
- GBV Focal Point Terms of Reference (ToR)

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation – Recommended Strategies:**

1. Set realistic short, medium and long-term goals.
2. Identify oversight mechanisms – internal, external, and operational grievance mechanisms.
3. Use qualitative and quantitative indicators of effectiveness:
4. Number of information/advocacy events organized to share information on the guidelines and tools for essential services;
5. Number of visits/requests to the information website/content developed under the programme;
6. Specific inter-agency agreements available for collaboration;
7. Number of training modules and curricula, developed or adapted in line with the global guidelines for capacity building of service providers;
8. Number of training and capacity building courses to address the guidelines and tools for the essential services and their core elements implemented.
9. Incorporate baseline data into measurement systems.
10. Adopt a system for measuring achievement of goals, outcomes and outputs.
11. Arrange for monitoring by an independent body and / or civil society.
12. Monitor outcomes of services which are provided and those services which are not provided.

13. Analyze and disseminate monitoring data – make data and analysis publicly available.
14. Report disaggregated data while maintaining confidentiality.

## E. PROJECT REVIEW CYCLE AND ADAPTATION

Learning from experience, rethinking and refining how services are delivered based on those learnings should be a continual process. Effectively meeting the needs of victims / survivors depends on service providers' ability to improve based on knowledge gained from their own experiences and those of other service providers. This is especially crucial during rapid-onset emergencies where services may need to be reviewed and further adapted in the event of a disaster, conflict or public health crisis such as COVID-19.

### Relevant Tools:

- ESP Joint Action Plan Tool
- Monitoring Tool
- Service Quality Assessments
- Implementation Checklists

### Project Review Cycle and Adaptation – Recommended Strategies:

1. Use monitoring and evaluation results to identify recommendations for improvement.
2. Implement recommendations.
3. Incorporate recommendations by victims / survivors and / or their advocates into changes and improvements to service delivery.
4. Conduct ongoing training for service providers on new developments and good practices in service delivery.

## ANNEX 1:

| ESP Implementation Checklist |  |
|------------------------------|--|
|                              | Have you conducted a desk review (i.e.: have you reviewed existing assessments, documents, mappings, etc.) available in your specific country context?   |
|                              | Have you identified key stakeholders to be engaged in ESP implementation or who can be involved in the assessment phase? Have you consulted with available actors/stakeholders in GBV referral pathways (if they exist in your context)?                                     |
|                              | Have you designed/adapted the data collection instruments required for assessment? (i.e.: FGDs, interviews, safety mappings, etc.)?  |
|                              | Have you conducted data collection via questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions (focused on existing structures and systems, quality of services, resource availability and requirements, gaps, survivor's knowledge on their rights and services available)? |
|                              | Have you conducted discussions and validations around the assessment findings with the identified key stakeholders?  |
|                              | Have you drafted a joint Action Plan with those identified key stakeholders based on the assessment findings?  |
|                              | Have you validated the Action Plan with those identified key stakeholders?   |
|                              | Have you conducted training or capacity-building efforts for the implementation of the Action Plan with the relevant key stakeholders?   |
|                              | Have you started implementation of the Action Plan by the four sectors (i.e.: Health, Social Services, Police and Justice, and Coordination and the Governance of Coordination)?   |
|                              | Have you established a system for Monitoring and Evaluation of ESP implementation?   |