

Briefing Paper:

Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism

This briefing paper aims at providing practical guidance to practitioners working to monitor National Action Plans on PVE to help ensure that the monitoring process and tools developed are aligned with emerging good practice and incorporate lessons learned from different contexts.

About this paper

The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) recommends that: *"each Member State should consider developing a national plan of action to prevent violent extremism which sets national priorities for addressing the local drivers of violent extremism and complements national counter-terrorism strategies where they already exist"*.ⁱ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) have been working with states to support the development, implementation and monitoring of effective PVE National Action Plans (NAPs), which take a whole-of-government and society approach, are grounded in human rights, promote respect for the principle of equality before the law and are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda.ⁱⁱ

Since 2015, there has been a growth in the development of NAPs on PVE.ⁱⁱⁱ To date more than 30 UN member states have developed PVE/countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies or plans.^{iv} Stages in development or implementation vary across contexts, as well as the framing and approaches contained within each plan. As National Strategies on PVE are operationalised into NAPs, questions remain on the most effective and appropriate way to monitor implementation, progress and crucially impact of these plans. National governments, implementing partners and national and local stakeholders in the NAP process face common challenges including: Theory of Change (ToC) development, design of consistent metrics for measurement and fit-for-purpose indicators, varying capacities for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), challenges in efficient, safe and secure data management, challenges in open information and knowledge exchange and learning. Policy, political and security environments in which NAPs are developed and rolled out vary significantly and influence the NAPs' design, implementation, M&E and dissemination. This briefing paper aims at providing practical guidance to practitioners working to monitor NAPs on PVE to help ensure that the monitoring process and tools developed are aligned with emerging good practice and incorporate lessons learned from different contexts.

Stock-taking on monitoring frameworks for NAPs on PVE

Of the more than 30 strategies or NAPs on PVE,^v few have a publicly available monitoring framework or ToC. Far fewer have clear financial resources dedicated to monitoring, assessment or evaluation. As with other NAP processes, such as for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), NAPs on PVE encounter similar shortcomings related to capacities and coordination around monitoring process and impact. In the case of NAPs on PVE, however, these challenges are magnified due to the complex, fluid and sensitive nature of violent extremism (VE), challenges in identifying appropriate and coherent measurement frameworks, the cross-cutting nature of prevention (spanning multiple sectors and mandates), and the multiplicity of civil, military, government and non-governmental actors working in this space.

A further challenge relates to the relative newness of the field and the various stages of development of existing NAPs on PVE. Given that many states are in the process of designing and planning their NAP and are only just embarking on or have not yet begun developing monitoring frameworks, there are few examples of established best practice, and rather more cases of emerging good practice and lessons to draw from.

Challenges for monitoring NAPs on PVE

Lack of capacities and resources for effective monitoring. A consistent challenge for NAP monitoring is a lack of capacity, knowledge and resources for M&E of NAPs among implementing partners. In particular, monitoring can be a burden for smaller, local civil society organisations (CSOs). In addition to limited capacities and resources, M&E for NAPs on PVE is beset with similar challenges to those faced by other interventions across the PVE sector, including measuring prevention, capturing behavioural change and assessing attribution or contribution in complex and dynamic operating and policy contexts.^{vi} Furthermore, the array of local and national prevention projects operating in parallel contributes to a disconnect between project-level data and data collected at national level, resulting in disjointed M&E frameworks.^{vii}

Lack of transparency and engagement in monitoring processes. Given the sensitive and political nature of PVE and the framing of NAPs on PVE with a broader counter-terrorism (CT) framework, some governments remain reluctant to apply a whole-of-society approach and engage civil society and a wide range of actors in the NAP process.^{viii} This applies both to design and monitoring of NAPs. As the CSOs are key delivery partners in NAPs on PVE, such engagement is crucial for gathering project-level M&E data, as well as important for building trust in the NAP implementation and reporting process. While there have been positive examples of consultative NAP development processes, there are fewer examples of consistent and meaningful CSO oversight and engagement in NAPs on PVE monitoring. Indeed, participation in design, implementation and monitoring of NAPs from civil society, private sector and academia remains a weakness across the NAP on PVE sector.^{ix} This, in turn, may negatively affect both accountability of the NAP process and the buy-in of key non-governmental actors. Lessons and good practice can be drawn from monitoring NAPs on UNSCR 1325, including examples of formalised civil society leadership roles in NAP monitoring processes (such as the Joint Government CSO Technical Monitoring Task Force in Nigeria).^x

In the face of complexity, monitoring can be reduced to a check-box exercise. When it is unable to capture complexity or monitor impact as a whole, often monitoring of NAPs is reduced to a check-box approach, both in terms of the content (indicators at activity and output level) and process. Measurement frameworks, therefore, risk only monitoring activity data and rarely speak to higher-level PVE objectives.

Capturing unintended consequences and potential for harm. Good practice for monitoring for PVE involves monitoring for unintended impact and negative impacts, as well as assessing programmes' or a set of interventions' impact within a complex operating environment.^{xi} Critical for monitoring interventions within an NAP on PVE is

understanding how other national programmes, in particular security or CT responses, interact with prevention activities. Military and other hard-security responses to combat terrorism have been shown to be counterproductive and at odds with prevention objectives.^{xii} As a significant number of NAPs on PVE are framed within CT strategies, the risk of this negative interaction increases. The CT and PVE/CVE framing can also increase the risk of stigmatisation and has the added challenge of creating an open environment for sharing data, given sensitivities.

Deficits in trust and its role in sharing information, data and lessons. Effective sharing and reporting on data by implementing agencies and partners working under the common framework of the NAP on PVE (whether state or non-state) is crucial to effective monitoring. However, sharing data within the framework on PVE interventions and the NAP on PVE is challenging, given the sensitivity of data, issues of data security and source safety, restrictions on sharing data related to national security, a lack of culture of data sharing particularly among defence actors, a lack of transparency on how the data is used and a lack of trust between different organisations holding relevant data. There are also few examples in the PVE, CVE and CT space where lessons from or evaluations of NAPs are shared.

Coordinating stakeholders. Issues related to coordination in NAP monitoring processes are commonplace; while mechanisms and mandates for data gathering, sharing and reporting are laid out in theory, these often do not work as effectively or efficiently in practice. This can risk overlapping, duplication or gaps in reporting. The 2019 evaluation of the Government of Finland's NAP for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism succinctly summarises the main challenges related to gaps in information flow between actors, lack of clarity of mandate between actors and lack of funding for sustained engagement of CSO actors.^{xiii}

Integration of gender into design and monitoring frameworks. VE is highly gendered. Women, men, girls and boys are impacted by, and engage with, VE in different ways. The majority of PVE/CVE programming is typically focused on men (young men in particular) and as such is gendered, although these assumptions around gender roles and norms are not always unpacked, and PVE/CVE programmes that are targeted at men also have impacts – whether direct or indirect – on women and sexual and gender minorities (SGM),^{xiv} although this is rarely reflected within monitoring frameworks. Implementers continue to face challenges in capturing gender-disaggregated data. Gaps remain in gender-sensitive analysis, indicators and monitoring methods for NAPs on PVE related to vulnerability and resilience to VE.^{xv}

Lack of space for adaptation within monitoring frameworks. The need for adaptation and learning, as well as exchange, for effective monitoring of NAP on PVE is widely acknowledged. However, implementing, reporting and reviewing timeframes, as well as rigidity of monitoring and reporting frames, do not allow for sufficient responsiveness, both to learning from NAP implementation and to the VE context.

Emerging good practice for monitoring NAPs on PVE

The majority of available guidance on good practice for PVE is focused on planning and development. Therefore, many of the lessons and examples of good practice for monitoring are drawn from lessons in design as well as implementing NAPs. As states that are further along with NAP implementation share more lessons, further evidence can be gathered for good practice. This said, robust M&E cannot be separated from the design process, and most of the lessons and recommendations for good practice at the development stage are also applicable to monitoring.

Good practice principles

Based on a review of existing monitoring of NAPs, learning from advisory work with UNDP country offices, interviews and consultations with PVE practitioners and experts, the following nine good practice principles, which underpin robust monitoring of PVE NAPs, are suggested:

Robust and comprehensive monitoring framework and ToC. A robust monitoring framework for NAPs on PVE should be based on a nuanced and contextualised understanding of, and include indicators which relate to, the VE context, including drivers, dynamics of vulnerability and resilience, and understanding of the role of gender norms and dynamics in recruitment prevention. Data and analyses should be drawn from a range of sources, including National Statistics, government data, interdisciplinary academic or think-tank research and grey literature. This includes, where possible, developing a robust ToC, which underlines major assumptions underpinning the PVE NAP.^{xvi} To date, relatively few national action planning processes for PVE have explicit NAP ToCs. Lebanon and Jordan are two notable examples. More examples of ToCs at NAP level can be found in UNSCR 1325 NAPs.^{xvii} Developing a ToC can help governments and other implementers to think through, and ultimately evidence, how the different pillars of the NAPs and specific actions contribute to the overall goal and desired PVE impact. The process can also have the added benefit of building mutual understanding, trust and information sharing between different actors if done in a participatory way.

Inclusive and transparent monitoring process. It is widely agreed across the literature that NAP development and monitoring processes that encourage transparency and accountability are inclusive and have wide engagement in monitoring (particularly by CSOs, women’s and youth networks, media and community-based actors representing those affected).^{xviii} In contexts where definitions of PVE are contested, policy development and decision-making are perceived as remote or opaque, trust in institutions is low and data not available to citizens, a transparent approach to monitoring based on principles of participation, transparency, inclusion and feedback can help create trust, engagement and buy-in. This participatory approach applies not only to the NAP’s development and the monitoring process but also to providing feedback and oversight to the process.

Nine emerging good practice principles for PVE NAP monitoring

1. Robust and comprehensive monitoring framework and ToC.
2. Inclusive and transparent monitoring process.
3. Adaptive to the VE context and integrates learning from implementation.
4. Considers areas of overlap with and avoids duplication with other NAP monitoring frameworks.
5. Well resourced and builds monitoring capacities.
6. Establishes mechanisms for coordinating and managing the monitoring process.
7. Captures impact, results, process and risk.
8. Embeds gender sensitivity.
9. Embeds conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm.

Questions and indicators for assessing inclusion in NAP monitoring processes

Questions

- Are members of civil society (including representatives of affected communities, marginalised groups, women, young people, academia, media, etc.) having regular meetings with a PVE Unit (or relevant government authority) to outline progress?
- Have focal points for PVE been identified within relevant ministries?
- Have focal points for liaising with civil society and other stakeholders been identified?
- Has a ‘gender champion’ been identified to ensure inclusion of a gender perspective into the PVE NAP and alignment with the UNSCR 1325 NAP monitoring process?
- Is there a clear and well-communicated system for review and feedback?

Potential indicators

- Number and diversity of CSOs and other key stakeholders involved in monitoring process (in framework design, monitoring, feedback and learning)
- % of CSOs and other key stakeholders who perceive the monitoring process to be participatory and inclusive
- % of CSOs and other key stakeholders who are satisfied with their role in monitoring and feedback processes
- Frequency of attendance of CSOs and other key stakeholders' meetings
- Changing size of participation in meetings over the course of the monitoring period (retention/ consistency of engagement)
- Decision-making, roles and structure of monitoring process (leadership, engagement and voice of different stakeholders)

Adaptive to the VE context and integrates learning from implementation. NAPs operate within a complex and dynamic VE context, tackling both structural drivers along with short-term pressures and threats. Over the period of NAP implementation, VE dynamics are likely to shift, as will policy-makers' and implementers' understanding of VE. The monitoring framework, therefore, should be capable of adapting to integrating new or revised metrics for measurement based on emerging evidence or changing realities on the ground. In addition to responding to and integrating the changing context, the regular monitoring process should help identify the strengths and weaknesses of PVE plans and their implementation, so that stakeholders can adapt implementation and the monitoring framework on an ongoing basis.

Considers areas of overlap with and avoids duplication with other NAP monitoring. It is important to identify areas of commonality between different NAP monitoring frameworks and avoid duplication of monitoring or data collection against common indicators with other NAPs. This creates synergies in monitoring and reporting, streamlines efforts and reduces the burden on agencies (ministries and other partners) responsible for collecting and reporting data. Likely areas of intersection with other NAPs or national strategies are indicators related to: women's role in prevention efforts, sexual and gender-based violence (UNSCR 1325), human rights, good governance and rule of law, youth peace and security (UNSCR 2250).^{xx} However, in doing this, it is important to consider and assess the risks related to linking other NAP monitoring frameworks to the PVE agenda. Tensions may exist between plans. For example, there has been significant criticism of the WPS agenda being subsumed into the PVE agenda.^{xx} A number of NAPs on WPS have outcomes that directly relate to PVE/CVE (for example, Ireland, Jordan, Lebanon, Switzerland, UK, among others). Where these indicators have already been developed and a monitoring process established, these indicators and the relevant data should be included in the NAP on PVE and not duplicated. Table 1 offers examples of potential areas of intersection between indicators from the UNSCR 1325 NAP and PVE NAP indicators.

Table 1: Selected examples of potential areas of intersection between indicators from UNSCR 1325 NAP and PVE NAP indicators

| NAP type | Example indicator | Potential interaction with PVE NAP |
|----------|---|---|
| WPS 1325 | Prevalence of sexual violence. Patterns of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. ^{xxi} | Sexual and gender-based violence has been and continues to be an explicit tactic of extremist militant groups. ^{xxii} |
| WPS 1325 | Percentage of benefits from DDR programmes received by women and girls. ^{xxiii} | Where DDR efforts relate to reintegration of women and girls associated with VE groups. |
| WPS 1325 | Proportion of total disbursed funding to CSOs that is allocated to address gender equality issues. | If adapted to focus on issues related to gender and VE issues (such as women’s role in prevention, efforts to support victims and survivors of VE groups, reintegration of women and girls associated with VE groups, etc.) |

Well resourced and builds monitoring capacities. Agencies responsible for implementing PVE NAPs often struggle to resource PVE actions outlined in the NAP and resources for monitoring, whether at the overall NAP level or for specific programmes. Identifying resources for monitoring at various levels (including baseline, longitudinal monitoring, quality assurance, evaluation, review and learning) should be done during the NAP development phase and included within budgets for the NAP and implementing partners’ actions. Given limited budgets and varying national and local M&E capacities, monitoring plans should be realistic and focused on developing capacities.

Establishes mechanisms for coordinating and managing the monitoring process. Where there is a diverse range of actors working on or around PVE in a context, it is important to establish clear, agreed and transparent structures and roles for monitoring across the NAP. UNOCT Guidance includes provision for an Inter-Agency Committee to oversee and manage the implementation of NAPs on PVE, which can also have a role in supervising the monitoring process. In addition to structures to oversee monitoring at a national level, regional exchange on good practices for monitoring offer opportunities to share relevant lessons learned and evidence across contexts.^{xxiv}

Embeds gender sensitivity. An NAP on PVE should integrate gender into the monitoring framework, indicators and monitoring process. The UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2022: Guidance Note – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism outlines some examples of good practice,^{xxv} including:

- Gender Markers (or GEM scores) and/or Gender Audits to assess the extent to which the programme and projects are gender sensitive.
- Inclusion of specific gender-sensitive indicators (see example in textbox) and sex-disaggregated indicators.
- Measuring the gendered impacts of the PVE/CVE projects that are solely focused on men.
- Ensuring that proxy indicators around factors such as VE, resilience or radicalisation are developed in a participatory way that involves women and men; and that they are based on a sound gender analysis of what VE and PVE/CVE success means for women/girls, men/boys and SGMs in the programming context.
- Ensuring that the M&E teams include those with gender expertise and an understanding of the importance of gender sensitivity, as well as the human resources (such as male and female research teams) to collect the views of women and men in a safe and appropriate way.

Examples of gender-sensitive indicators for an NAP on PVE monitoring framework

At portfolio or programme level:

Gender Equality Markers (or GEM scores) can be used to assess whether PVE/CVE projects make no contribution to gender equality (0), significant contribution to gender equality (1), or whether their principal objective is to advance gender equality (2) at design and funding stages.

For policy and strategy work:

- The NAP/Strategy for PVE/CVE adheres to human rights principles and is gender sensitive
- % of women and men (disaggregated by sex and age) in the target community who are aware of the NAP/Strategy for PVE/CVE
- % of women and men (disaggregated by sex and age) in the target community who express confidence in national policy
- % of women and men (disaggregated by gender and age) who agree that the NAP/Strategy addresses their concerns and priorities (related to security, governance, development, etc.)

For community-based programming included in the NAP: Indicators should, of course, be informed by the nature of the programme, context for intervention and ToC. However, some example of quantitative proxy indicators on PVE/CVE outcomes include:

- Number of studies produced on the gendered drivers of VE; or women's role in VE and PVE/CVE
- % participants (disaggregated by sex and age) who reject the use of violence (including violence by violent extremist organisations and gender-based violence)
- Number of young people (disaggregated by age and sex) that feel listened to and/or empowered
- % decrease in reported frustration of young men and women (disaggregated by age and sex)
- Number of women's rights organisations actively working on peacebuilding or PVE/CVE in the area
- % of female returnees who report they are victims of ostracisation and bullying in their community
- % of women and men (disaggregated by sex and age) who have a positive perception of the counter-narrative
- % of young women and men (disaggregated by sex and age) able to fulfil their desires to marry and have a family
- % of young women and men who report that they have supportive peer support networks

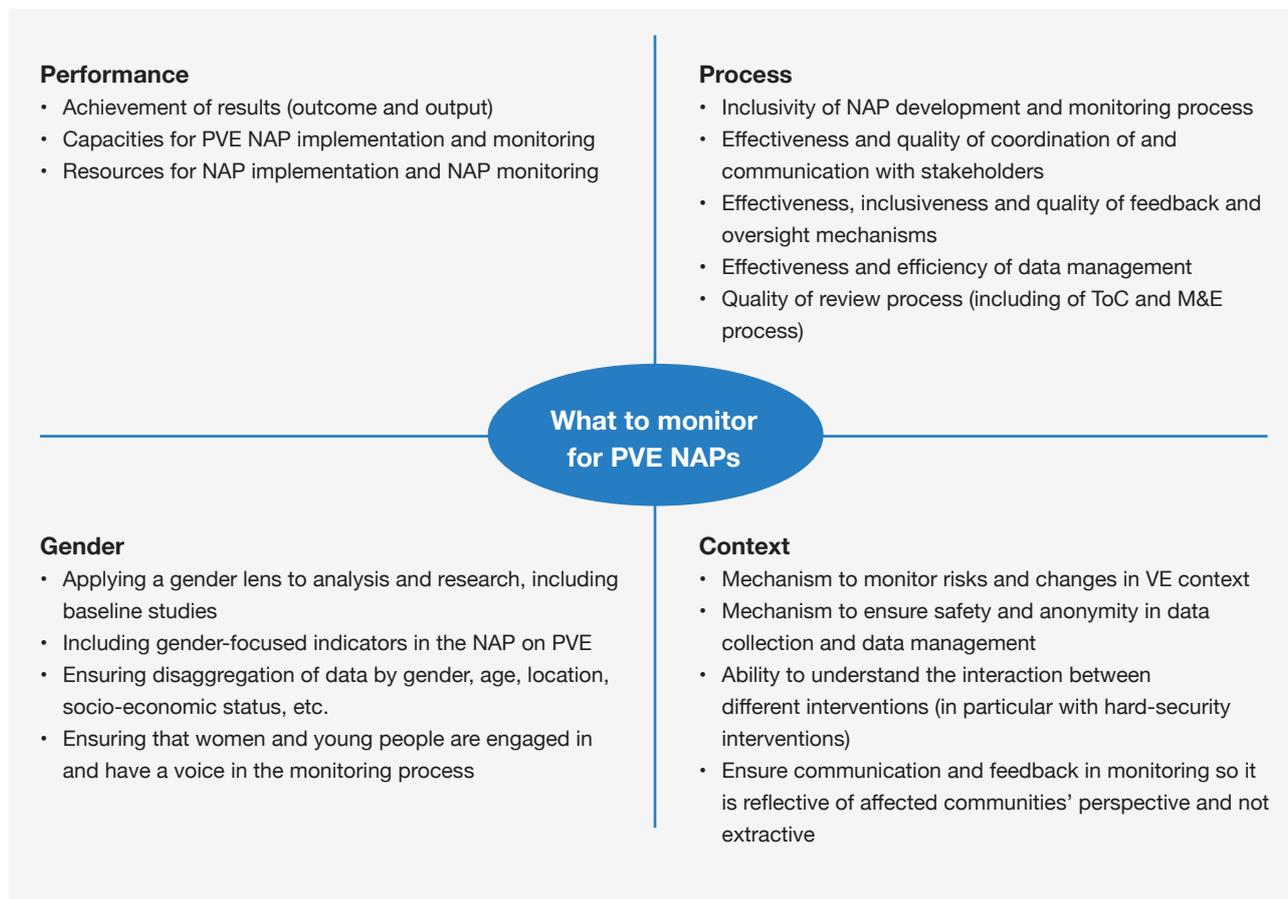
Adapted from: UK HMG, UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2022: Guidance Note – Implementing Strategic Outcome 6: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, Case Study Thirteen: Examples of gender-sensitive P/CVE indicators, 2018, p.25

Originally adapted from: L. Holdaway and R. Simpson, Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation, UNDP and International Alert, 2018

Captures impact, results, process, risk. Given the complexity, diversity and scope of actions, including in an NAP on PVE, and the challenges of identifying outcome- or impact-level indicators, for the purposes of ease of aggregating results across the plan, indicators often relate basic results (such as number of activities or participants reached). This includes number of activities implemented, agencies supported or individuals reached. Emphasis is placed on output performance-related achievements, rather than PVE outcomes or the NAP's overall impact. It is important to include performance-related indicators at impact, outcome and output level in order to avoid 'projectising' the NAP and to see how the different interventions and results contribute to the overall PVE goal and desired PVE impact. In addition, this helps build an understanding of how different actions implemented by different actors may contribute to similar outcomes (or indeed impact positively or negatively on another outcome). The Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development^{xxvi} provides relevant examples of indicators that can be applied to prevention, as does the UNDP and International Alert's PVE Indicator Bank.^{xxvii}

An NAP on PVE's success is measured not only by results achieved but also through the quality of delivery, the quality of the process of NAP design, implementation and reporting, inclusion of gender and consideration of risk and Do No Harm.^{xxviii} (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Examples of NAP on PVE indicators of performance, process, gender and VE context^{xxix}



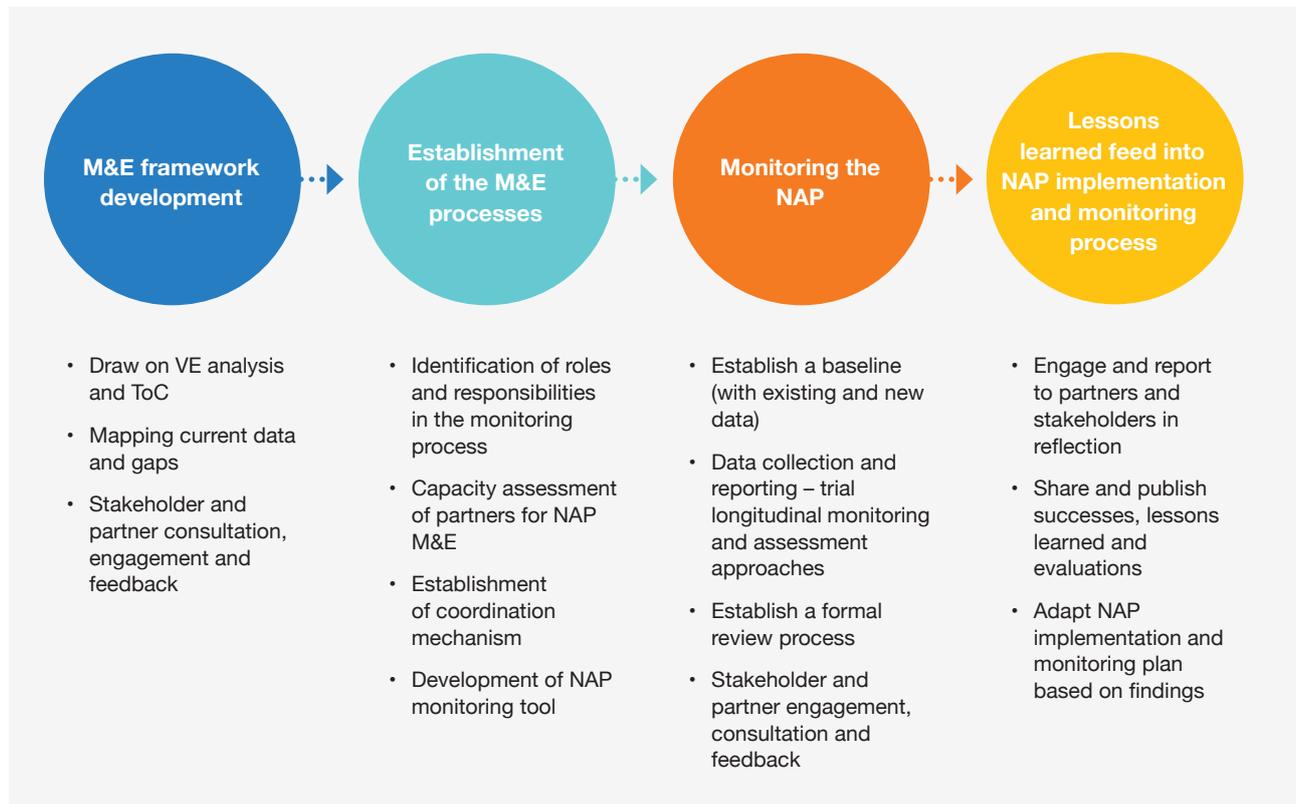
Embeds conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm. Security-focused CVE and CT measures, such as the practice of detaining those released from the captivity of VE groups, can infringe on rights and can erode trust in state institutions responsible for prevention and the NAP on PVE process itself.^{xxx} It is crucial that the monitoring frameworks for the NAP can capture any potential harm caused by interventions that can interact with actions within the NAP, including more hard-security-focused CT interventions. In addition, interventions within the NAP on PVE can also have unintended negative consequences. To reduce the risk of harm and enhance the NAP on PVE's contribution to prevention, the monitoring process should:

- be based on regularly reviewed analysis of the VE contexts;
- include indicators on the VE context, such as:
 - CVE/CT measures enforced;
 - perceptions of trust in government institutions;
 - attitudes towards minorities and refugees;
 - attitudes towards security measures;
 - presence of armed or extremist groups; and
 - number of returned foreign fighters or individuals associated with extremist groups; and
- provide for a review of results, including identification of unintended impact (positive and negative).

Towards a process for monitoring NAPs on PVE

This section proposes a process for monitoring NAPs on PVE, taking into account emerging good practice and lessons. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Establishing and implementing a monitoring process for an NAP on PVE



Developing a cohesive measurement framework

A common problem identified in monitoring PVE NAPs is the ‘projectisation’ of results and lack of ability to assess the progress towards the NAP’s goal in its totality.^{xxxi} Developing a ToC for how each element of the NAP reaches its aspired prevention goal and how the PVE NAP intersects with other relevant action plans (UNSCR 1325, etc.) helps ensure ‘bigger-picture thinking’, as well as developing a common vision and understanding of the intended objectives of the NAP and each partner’s role within it. The governments of both Lebanon and Jordan have gone through a process of developing ToCs for their respective NAPs, which has involved developing a vision for the desired change, mapping current and planned work across the NAPs’ pillars and identifying high-level and mid-term outcomes and results nested within the ToC.

A best practice process would see ToCs developed based on an analysis of the VE context, which draws on literature, analysis and evidence from a range of sources (government, academic, civil society, etc.) and identifies gaps in knowledge. Objectives and indicators are developed and validated with partners and stakeholders through an inclusive and participatory process. This can have the advantage of building common understanding and buy-in across different ministries concerned, grounding the ToC in the realities of the local contexts, helping it reflect different priorities and needs (particularly of local authorities, local civil society, women’s groups and youth networks), and building trust in and transparency of the process.

Establishment of the monitoring process

Identify and communicate roles and responsibilities in the monitoring process early on, so there is clarity among partners. With PVE Units taking a coordinating role, agencies responsible for monitoring and reporting should develop clear plans within their organisations and with their own partners on what data is collected, by whom, when and how. It is useful to identify PVE NAP monitoring focal points within ministries and other partners, who would be responsible for collating and reporting on data. Data security and safety should be explicitly included in these plans. Monitoring partners should consider any risks to data security or safety implications for field data collectors or participants, as well as the most sensitive and appropriate methods for data collection.

It is important to **conduct a capacity assessment with partners**, as capacities for monitoring vary across partners. Issues of capacity gaps tend to be more apparent in PVE, given the additional complexity of identifying PVE-specific (projects with a specific PVE objective) and PVE-relevant (projects without a specific PVE objective, but which contribute to a PVE outcome or goal) programmes, monitoring at outcome level and the challenges and sensitivities around PVE monitoring data. Eleven key questions for assessing monitoring capacities are laid out in the textbox.

11 questions for understanding current capacities for monitoring

1. What data is currently collected that fits under the PVE NAP (both PVE specific and PVE relevant)? Is data collected on context-specific PVE issues or target groups (such as data on community perceptions on conflict issues, governance, etc.)?
2. For the purposes of the NAP on PVE, what are the main gaps in data currently collected?
3. Where relevant, can data be disaggregated by key markers, such as gender, age, location, socio-economic background, etc.?
4. What are the methods for data collection? Is data collected directly by entity or gathered through implementing partner reports (such as CSO reports to line ministry)?
5. What reporting templates and tools are currently being used?
6. Who is responsible for a) collecting data, b) entering and cleaning data, c) analysing data and d) quality assuring data? Are these roles clearly identified?
7. What systems are used for data entry and data storage/management? How do these compare to other stakeholders?
8. What resources (personnel, technical, equipment, budget, etc.) are currently available for monitoring?
9. How do data-management processes consider, mitigate and manage data risks and security (such as protecting identity of data providers)?
10. How is monitoring data reported (how often, in what format and with whom)?
11. What are the existing methods of disseminating information and learning (which platforms, to which audiences, in what format, etc.)? Is information accessible to other key NAP on PVE stakeholders?

The PVE Unit or relevant mandated government body should **establish a coordination mechanism for monitoring and reporting against the NAP on PVE**. This could be in the form of a technical monitoring working group or another formal reporting structure. NAP implementing partners and stakeholders, including civil society, should be included in this process. Participation can be enhanced through informal processes, such as through consultations, grassroots engagement with affected communities, and shadow reports and report cards, etc.

Overcoming the challenge of monitoring when NAP activities are not fully defined, an example from Uganda

Not all partners (government and non-government) may have clearly defined roles or actions when the NAP's monitoring framework is first established. A monitoring framework should have the flexibility to allow for actions and indicators to be defined and further refined for domains where PVE activities are envisaged within the plan but not yet set. In Uganda's NAP on PVE, for example, education was identified as an important pillar of the NAP; however, education-focused activities had not yet been defined. As a solution and in the context of the development of a result framework for Uganda's NAP, the UNDP supported the National Technical Commission of Uganda to include a series of explicit coordination activities (including planning meetings and outreach events on the NAP) with senior-level officials in the Ministry of Education, with the objective to identify more concrete PVE activities in the education domain, such as curriculum reforms to be undertaken over the following three years. Therefore, while the final NAP framework was not fully complete, it did include interim indicators to measure the result of outreach activities with the Ministry of Education to develop these reforms.

A number of monitoring tools for NAPs exist and can be tailored to NAP on PVE development. In essence, a **monitoring tool for NAPs on PVE is similar to other policy and NAP monitoring tools. However, there are specific considerations for PVE.** The goal or objective should be PVE specific and based on analysis of national conflict and VE dynamics; the PVE assumptions behind the indicator are explicit and are underpinned by the analysis; and more emphasis should be placed on measuring success holistically and beyond performance measures to include specific indicators on process, gender and context. The tool can be streamlined or simplified for partners based on their monitoring capacities. See Figure 3 for an example of an NAP on PVE monitoring tool.

Figure 3: Example of an NAP monitoring tool^{xxxii}

| PVE goal/objective | Primary target group | Performance/ Process/ Gender/ Context (qualitative/ quantitative) | Indicator | PVE assumptions | Type/ Level (impact, outcome, output) | Collection tools/Means of verification | Lead monitoring agency | Implementing partners | Frequency |
|--|---------------------------|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
| [e.g. Increase in space for platforms for moderate voices] | [e.g. Media outlet staff] | [e.g. Performance/ Quantitative] | [e.g. Number of individuals trained (media outlet staff)] | [e.g. Divisive speech in media. Outlets trained have reach and legitimacy, including communities impacted by VE; media outlets identified are representative of diverse views] | [e.g. Output] | [e.g. Training assessments; activity report] | [e.g. Ministry of Information] | [e.g. Media outlets, trainers, Ministry of Information] | [e.g. Annual] |

Monitoring the NAP

Once the NAP is developed and indicators identified, a **baseline should be conducted** using a review of existing data from government agencies (such as Office of National Statistics or equivalent, government departments, state service providers, etc.), academic literature, private sector and non-governmental implementing agencies. The baseline should collect data on five main elements: 1) VE context; 2) existing PVE interventions; 3) NAP implementing agency capacities; 4) level of stakeholder engagement on PVE; and 5) attitudes and practices of communities to PVE. Given the newness of NAPs on PVE, key data, particularly at an impact level, may not exist and baseline studies may need to be commissioned. Adequate resources should be made available for filling data gaps.

Data collection and reporting should be carried out as per the agreed plan established when the monitoring process was developed. The UN Statistics Division also provides useful information on methodologies for statistical data collection (household surveys, economic statistics, big data), as well as good practice guidance and information on data quality for SDG indicators, which may be relevant to NAPs on PVE.^{xxxiii} It is likely, however, in a PVE context that the processes should allow for some flexibility in more dynamic contexts and place more emphasis on safety and security (of data and participants). As a number of the actions within the NAP on PVE may be pilots or untested, trialling longitudinal monitoring approaches would allow more real-time assessment of specific NAP on PVE interventions in order to generate an evidence base and to adapt the programme if necessary. Given the limited resources for in-depth or innovative monitoring techniques across the NAP, such monitoring could be piloted or phased into the plan.

A **review process** should be established along with a **mechanism for stakeholder and partner engagement, consultation and feedback**. The textbox provides examples of these mechanisms based on the experiences of implementing and monitoring NAPs on WPS.

Engaging civil society in monitoring NAP processes – lessons from NAPs on WPS

To leverage NAPs for change, civil society should engage in an ongoing fashion, either formally or informally as possible, from NAP development through implementation processes. It should use the NAP as a tool to leverage change in how government and civil society work together for peace and gender justice, and to strengthen women's participation, protection and rights in a wide range of areas from women's engagement in peace processes to militarised institutions to development aid.

Formal participation, such as through an intergovernmental committee, funded implementation project or technical monitoring task force, increases the opportunity for civil society recommendations to have an impact. However, informal participation, such as through consultations, grassroots mobilisation, and shadow reports and report cards, increases the opportunity for dedicated civil society space and independent voices. To balance these concerns, it is useful to ensure a dedicated civil society space, while also coordinating with supportive governmental stakeholders to ensure civil society voices have meaningful results.

Source: WILPF, Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for local change: Civil society opportunities in the MENA Region, 2014

Lessons learned and adaptation

While there is substantial literature on lessons learned on NAP on PVE development, there is very little literature on what works and how for monitoring NAPs on PVE. Based on other NAP processes and lessons on effective learning and exchange, the **NAP monitoring process should allow for regular formal exchange and more ad hoc informal reflection including a range of stakeholders** (government, civil society including religious leaders, youth networks, women networks, media, academia, private sector and affected communities). Progress, lessons learned and evaluations should be shared and published. If sharing full evaluations is not possible, sharing summaries of findings, the frameworks and lessons learned publicly should still be feasible and not entail so much reputational risk.

Good practice is that information from monitoring data informs decision-making and adaptation of ongoing implementation. **Given the increased level of dynamism in contexts around the PVE NAP and gaps in evidence for effective PVE programmes, flexibility to adapt the NAP on PVE framework based on monitoring data becomes all the more important.** The monitoring review processes and reporting should allow for changes to NAP implementation and monitoring plan (indicators, targets, etc.) based on monitoring findings.

Recommendations

Based on lessons learned and the emerging good practice outlined above, the following are recommendations for monitoring PVE NAPs:

Use the monitoring process to support transparency, accountability and trust between stakeholders. Use the mechanism and network established for the monitoring process, data collection and dissemination of learning to bring stakeholders together. As far as possible, the monitoring process should be participatory, engaging a wide range of implementing agencies and stakeholders at local and national level (government, civil society, media, academia, private sector, etc.). Clarify roles and responsibilities for monitoring and defining clear channels for communication on the monitoring process. Piloting M&E or learning process on specific aspects of the NAP and sharing the learning can provide an entry point for demonstrating value and building buy-in. Ensure that this process considers security of data and safety of M&E participants, as well as balancing sensitivities of sharing confidential data with the need for accountability.

Establish a process for learning and feedback. Through NAP development, monitoring and review process, build a culture of exchange and feedback among government, civil society including religious leaders, youth networks, women networks, media, academia, private sector and other actors to encourage openness across different government and non-government stakeholders for a more meaningful assessment of progress and impact.

Measurement should focus on NAP progress and impact as a whole rather than being reduced to a series of project-level results. An integrated view of measurement would include assessing NAP design and implementation in terms of performance, process, gender and context, including indicators at impact and outcome levels and reviewing based on a holistic ToC for the NAP.

Data collection for M&E requirements for NAPs should be simple and aligned with existing methods, capacities and resources. Newly established PVE Units, government and civil society implementing partners may have limited monitoring capacities and resources, as well as different methods, for monitoring and data management. Monitoring frameworks, tools, data collection and analysis and reporting should be as streamlined as possible and designed to fit existing capacities.

Resource M&E for the NAP and implementing partners. Budgets for monitoring interventions with the NAP and for the NAP overall should be considered at NAP planning phase, including baseline, end line and period review. This includes monitoring budgets for NAP implementing agencies and partners, including civil society so that the continuity of monitoring is secured, and the evidence and lessons learned are fed back into the NAP review process. Wherever possible, additional M&E resources should be allocated to more in-depth M&E, particularly of pilot or innovative prevention approaches.

Consider complementarity, interactions and overlaps with other national strategies and plans. NAPs on PVE engage different areas of government and actors across different sectors (education, social development, gender, youth, culture, interior, defence, etc.) and interventions are likely to intersect with other National Strategies, Frameworks and Action Plans (WPS 1325, youth, etc.). Objectives, outcomes, outputs and actions within the NAP on PVE should align with these and share common indicators where relevant. In addition, monitoring frameworks for NAPs on PVE consider points of interaction with national CVE and CT strategies and plans, and take into account where more hard-security and CT-focused measures may have unintended negative impacts for the prevention agenda.

Endnotes

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