

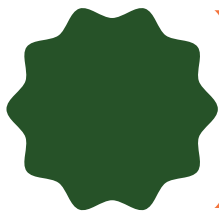


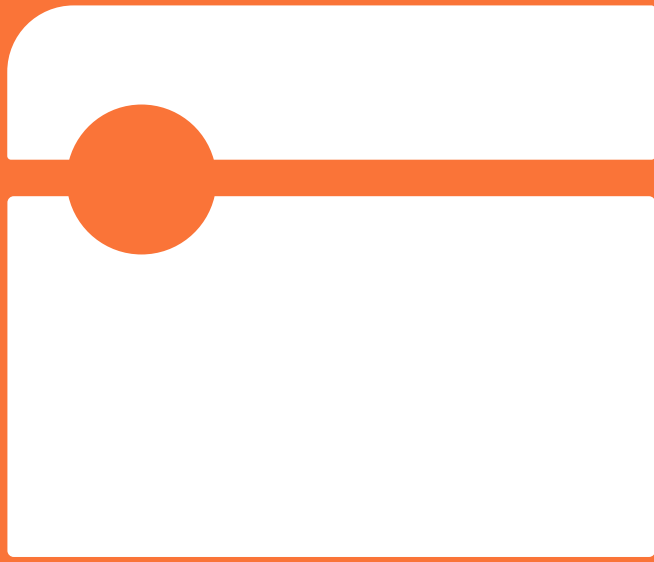
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A Brief Guide to Gender Analysis for Firearms Focal Points





The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) aimed at strengthening national and regional capacities to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, thus contributing to enhanced stability, security, and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

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The Guide was prepared by Dragan Božanić, SEESAC Gender and Research Project Analyst. It draws extensively on the *Training on Critical Thinking Skills and Analytical Capacities* and the *Firearms Intelligence Analysis Training for FFPs*, conducted by Alain Lapon, SEESAC Chief Technical Adviser, and Martin Van Der Meij, SEESAC SALW Control Expert, respectively, both of whom also provided substantial support during its development.

The Guide further benefited from the valuable contributions and insights of Jelena Bujaković, SALW Project Specialist, and Juliana Buzi, Regional Cooperation Specialist.

The Purpose and Structure of the Guide

This Guide aims to support Firearms Focal Points (FFPs) in integrating the gender perspective across their activities through consistent gender-sensitive data collection and the effective application of gender analysis to enhance the intelligence picture. Building on the existing standard operating procedures, the Guide seeks to facilitate gender mainstreaming within the regular operations of FFPs and serve as a practical tool for addressing key gender aspects of firearms criminality.

The Guide is structured in five chapters.

The **first chapter** provides a concise overview of key data illustrating the gendered dynamics of firearms criminality and the differing experiences of women and men in this context. It also highlights key activities undertaken in the Western Balkans to mainstream gender in SALW control, as well as efforts to enhance the analytical, operational, and institutional capacities of FFPs.

The **second chapter** addresses the strategic importance of integrating the gender perspective into the operations of Firearms Focal Points (FFPs).

The **third chapter** introduces gender-sensitive data collection and provides a detailed overview of the various types of gender statistics relevant to the work of FFPs.

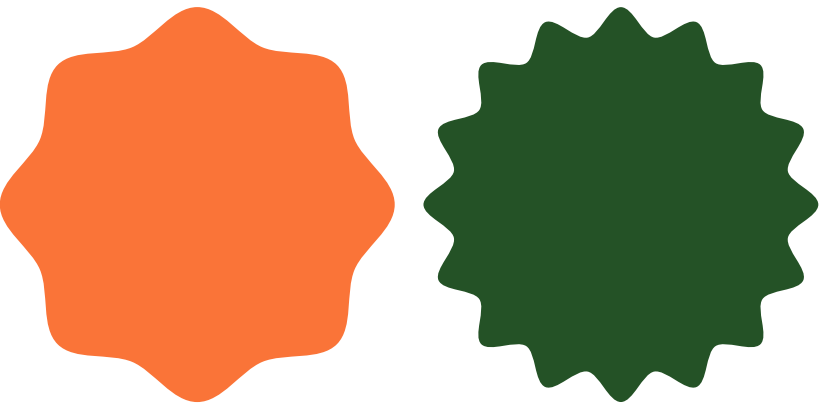
The **fourth chapter** focuses on gender analysis, examining the relationship between gender and crime analysis, and emphasising the role of gender analysis in establishing a comprehensive intelligence picture. As a follow-up, it presents a tailored step-by-step methodology for conducting gender analysis within the context of FFPs' operations.

Finally, the **fifth chapter** underscores the significance of incorporating gender analysis into the analytical products of FFPs.

Additionally, the Guide includes a **glossary** defining the key concepts used throughout.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why Does Gender Perspective Matter for Understanding and Preventing Firearms Criminality?

In the Western Balkans, extensive research¹ has provided substantial evidence documenting the highly gendered aspects of firearms and firearms-related criminality, as well as the different experiences of women and men in this context. Research has shown that gendered aspects of firearms are evident in the distribution of firearms (ownership and demand), patterns, dynamics, and characteristics of firearms-related crime, the different impacts of firearms misuse on women and men, their exposure to firearms violence, the role of firearms in gender-based violence and violence against women, and variations in experiences and attitudes towards firearms.

The following overview highlights key data that illustrate the gendered dynamics of firearms criminality and the different experiences of women and men in this context:

1. **Firearms ownership, demand, and access are highly gendered.** *In the region, men own 97.2% of all legally owned firearms, while women own 2.8%. These patterns are persistent and can be observed in the unchanging annual trends in new licence acquisitions.*

Data from a regional survey conducted in 2024 show that men are 3.5 times more likely than women to report that they would own a gun, at 10.4% and 2.9%, respectively. This is particularly evident among men aged 18–30, who are more inclined to have positive attitudes towards firearm ownership than men from any other age group.

In addition to civilian firearm ownership, men overwhelmingly dominate security sector professions and activities involving firearms. Previous SEESAC research found that 91.2% of all security sector personnel authorised to carry firearms in the region were men, compared to 8.8% women. Furthermore, men also predominate in activities such as hunting and sport shooting, both of which involve regular access to firearms.

2. **Patterns of offending are strongly gendered, with incidents involving firearms predominantly committed by men.** *In 2024, men accounted for 98% of perpetrators of firearm-related incidents, confirming previously documented patterns. Armed violence by men is also age-related, with young men more likely to misuse firearms than those in other age groups. In 2024 alone, men aged 19 to 35 accounted for just under half (45%) of all perpetrators of firearm-related incidents.*
3. **The risks associated with firearms differ significantly for women and men. Armed violence against men occurs primarily in criminal contexts, public disputes, and undetermined shootings.** *SEESAC analysis documented that, of all men killed with firearms in the region, 24.9% were killed in public disputes, 24.4% in criminal contexts, 23.4% in shootings where the cause was unidentified, and 11% in domestic violence, almost exclusively committed by other male family members.*
4. **Women make up the majority of victims of firearm-related violence in the context of domestic violence.** *While men are more likely to misuse firearms than to become*

¹ For more details, consult SEESAC's website, SALW Knowledge Base, section [Gender and SALW](#).

their victims, women are ten times more likely to be victims than perpetrators of firearm incidents. This disproportionate representation of women among victims of armed violence is mainly related to the use of firearms in domestic and intimate partner violence. Between 2019 and 2023, 68.4% of all women killed with firearms in the region were killed by family members, compared to 10.9% of men. Women are particularly at risk of being killed with firearms by their intimate partners—this makes for 50.7% of all firearm femicides in the region.

5. **The gendered trends in offending, victimisation, gender-based violence, ownership, and demand are remarkably stable, with only minor fluctuations recorded.** As discussed later in the Guide, prevailing gender norms, roles, and inequalities, in complex interplay with other factors, shape and contribute to the specific experiences and risks that women and men face regarding firearms and firearms-related criminality.

1.2 Addressing Gender Aspects of Firearms in the Western Balkans

Gender-responsive firearms/small arm² control refers to arms control legislation, policies, programmes, and operations that take into account and actively address the different experiences and roles of women, men, girls, and boys in relation to small arms (control), as well as the gender-specific risks they face regarding small arms proliferation and misuse.

In contrast, neglecting the gender dimension of firearms use, misuse, and possession, as documented in previous SEESAC research, significantly undermines the effectiveness of measures aimed at preventing firearms criminality and armed violence. The consequences of this so-called **gender-blind approach** are evident in persistent trends, including the prevalence of femicides committed with firearms and the increased vulnerability of young men to armed violence, both as perpetrators and victims.

Box 1: What is Gender Mainstreaming?³

Gender mainstreaming has been internationally adopted as a key strategy towards making gender equality a reality.

The UN definition of gender mainstreaming [ECOSOC (1997/2)] is: “The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral

part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is achieving gender equality.”

In this Guide, the terms ‘gender mainstreaming’ and ‘integration of the gender perspective’ are used interchangeably.

² In the context of this Guide, the terms ‘firearms,’ ‘small arms,’ and ‘arms’ are used interchangeably.

³ UNSDG, 2019, Gender Mainstreaming.

In cooperation with institutions in the region, SEESAC has undertaken a comprehensive set of activities to support gender mainstreaming in SALW control, including:

- strengthening the capacities of institutions responsible for arms control to mainstream gender in their work (through training, coaching, consultative support, and development of practical tools),
- continuous research and data collection, and support to evidence-based and gender-responsive arms control policy development and operations in the region,
- raising awareness about the links between gender and small arms,
- increasing the participation of women in arms control policymaking.

The large-scale gender analysis of small arms control legislation and policies conducted in 2021 concluded that significant progress has been made by the institutions in the Western Balkans in integrating the gender perspective into small arms control policies and increasing their gender responsiveness. [SALW control strategies and action plans](#) adopted across the region **include specific targets to fully integrate gender and age perspectives in SALW control**. To that end, multiple measures are foreseen, including:

- to further develop institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming,
- to improve record-keeping practices and gender-sensitive data collection,
- to address the links between firearms and domestic violence,
- to respond to gendered aspects of firearms demand, use, and misuse—including the links between socially dominant masculinity norms and firearms,
- to increase the participation and representation of women in arms control.

The analysis indicated that future efforts should specifically support institutions in mainstreaming gender at the operational level, thereby clearly demonstrating the practical value it brings to arms control efforts.

Such actions have been implemented under the regional project *Support for Enhancing the Fight Against the Illegal Possession, Misuse, and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the Western Balkans* funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II). Through this project, SEESAC is providing support to the Western Balkans authorities to mainstream the gender perspective in the SALW control measures. This includes, for example, the development of practical guidelines for gender-responsive firearm license approval⁴ and guidelines to adequately assess risks and prevent the use of firearms in domestic violence.⁵

4 SEESAC, 2024, Guidelines for Gender-Responsive Firearms Licence Approval.

5 SEESAC, 2024, Guidelines for Assessing and Addressing Risks Related to the Firearms Misuse in Domestic Violence.

Regarding FFPs, SEESAC provided comprehensive technical assistance, training, and regional cooperation initiatives to enhance their analytical, operational, and institutional capacities. This included the development of Standard Operating Procedures, specialised training in matters such as analytical skills, online investigations, open-source intelligence, and critical thinking, as well as targeted technical support. SEESAC also supported the strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation among the FFPs, prosecutors, ballistic experts, and other law enforcement units, improving the intelligence-to-evidence chain and increasing the use of analytical products in investigations and criminal proceedings. Furthermore, by supporting their participation in Joint Action Days, study visits, and exchanges with EU counterparts, SEESAC helped align regional methodologies with the EU and European Firearms Experts (EFE) standards.

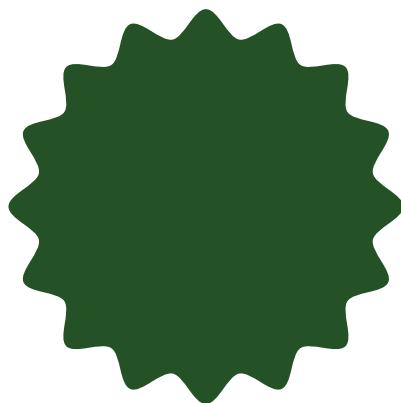
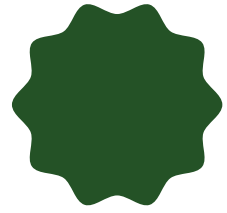
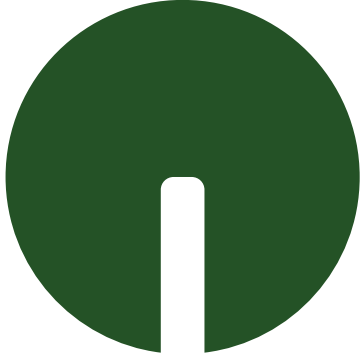
By organising Annual FFP Meetings since 2018, SEESAC has supported the establishment of a key regional coordination platform for firearms intelligence, enabling systematic knowledge exchange, harmonisation of analytical approaches, and region-wide coherence in addressing emerging threats. These efforts have resulted in measurable improvements in the quality, consistency, and frequency of analytical outputs, expanded regional information sharing, and strengthened international cooperation, including tracing and engagement with EU mechanisms.

Within this context, support is also provided to the FFPs to integrate a gender perspective into their operations. To this end, a regional workshop was held in 2022 on gender aspects of firearms criminality, and in 2024, a consultative workshop was held on the development of this Guide, which leverages on this process and the expressed needs and priorities of the FFPs identified through consultations.

The Guide also closely builds on *Training on Critical Thinking Skills and Analytical Capacities* and *The Firearms Intelligence Analysis Training for FFP* delivered by SEESAC in 2022 and 2024, respectively.

Key Takeaways

- Firearms and firearms-related criminality are highly gendered. Women and men have distinct experiences with firearms and face gender-specific risks.
- Prevailing gender norms and roles, as well as dominant concepts of masculinity and femininity, shape these experiences, in interplay with other factors.
- Gender-responsive small arms control addresses and responds to the different experiences and gender-specific risks of women, men, girls, and boys regarding firearms.
- In contrast, neglecting the gender dimension in arms control undermines the effectiveness of efforts to prevent firearms violence, with the consequences of this gender-blind approach evident in persistent trends.
- In the Western Balkans, ongoing efforts at the legislative, policy, and operational levels aim to integrate the gender perspective in small arms control.



2. The Strategic Importance of Integrating Gender Perspective in the Operations of Firearms Focal Points

A Firearms Focal Point (FFP) provides integrated tactical and strategic intelligence services to inform and support law enforcement agencies in better understanding and effectively addressing firearms-related crime.⁶

To achieve this, the FFP gathers information, develops intelligence through analysis, and improves the flow of information on the illicit possession, criminal use, and trafficking of firearms, their essential components, and ammunition into and within jurisdictions, both domestically and internationally, at strategic and operational levels.

Given the strongly gendered aspects of firearms and firearms-related criminality, the intelligence picture should also reflect these dynamics. Clear recognition of gender patterns in offending, victimisation, and the impact of firearms misuse, as well as the distribution of firearms is therefore integral to developing a comprehensive intelligence picture. Consistently integrating a gender perspective into FFP operations is a critical precondition for creating gender-responsive intelligence that informs effective policy and operational responses.

Operationally, such an understanding of gender patterns in firearms criminality informs the entire process of data collection, analysis, and intelligence production, ensuring that the characteristics and dynamics of firearms-related trends and issues are accurately identified and effectively addressed.

In the Western Balkans, comprehensive **standard operating procedures (SOPs) for FFPs** were adopted, defining the FFP concept, purpose, vision, and key functions.

The SOPs emphasise the importance of gender considerations, particularly in building a knowledge base and understanding of firearms-related crime, and in developing a broader intelligence picture, including gender-related aspects of firearms criminality. The FFP is responsible for ensuring **that gender analysis is integrated at all stages, including the collection and integration of intelligence**, strategic intelligence assessments such as threat assessments, intelligence packages for tactical operations, *ad hoc* intelligence reports, foresight and horizon scanning, and the drafting of recommendations.

To this end, the SOPs specifically state that the FFP shall:

- Collect and integrate a comprehensive, up-to-date, and gender-sensitive intelligence dataset on firearms and ballistic intelligence.
- Develop recommendations to divert and prevent firearms criminality, including the gender aspects of firearms criminality.
- Develop and disseminate statistical reports necessary for monitoring the gender aspects of firearms criminality, including links with gender-based violence, to facilitate increased gender responsiveness in relevant legislation, policies, and operational responses by enhancing the comprehensive and systematic use of gender analysis.
- Provide statistics, information, assessments, and reports, including gender-related statistics, to the respective points of contact for use at the international level.
- Provide additional details about the gun used in the crime beyond ballistic identification, including any conversion methods applied or other relevant

6 SEESAC, 2020, Guidelines on Establishing a Firearms Focal Point.

characteristics that may assist the investigation, as well as any gender-related aspects of the crime.

The SOPs further stipulate that intelligence products produced by the FFP, such as *ad hoc* intelligence reports, tactical and strategic assessments, problem profiles, and subject profiles, should be based on sound gender analysis.

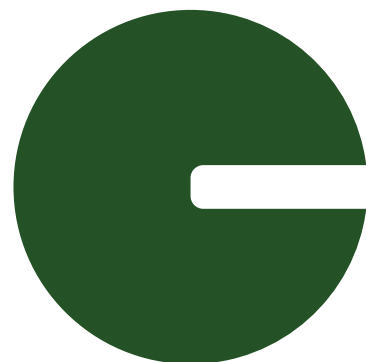
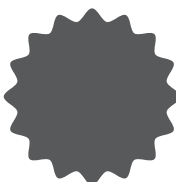
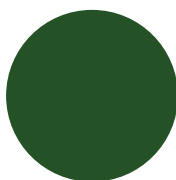
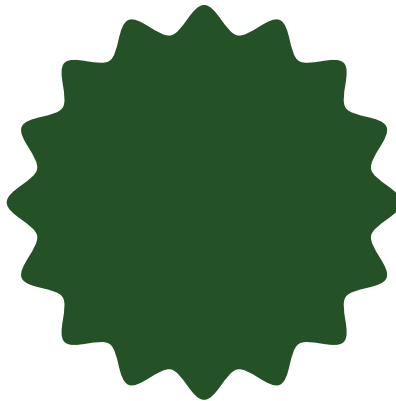
This Guide aims to support the FFPs in these efforts and enhance their operational effectiveness by integrating a gender perspective across their activities. This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring consistent gender-sensitive data collection to improve the availability of gender statistics; and
- Consistently using gender analysis to enhance the intelligence picture.

In doing so, the Guide primarily aims to support the integration of a gender perspective into regular operations already performed by FFP officers and serves as an aid to professionals to better address gender concerns in their daily work, building on existing procedures and business processes.

Key Takeaways

- In the Western Balkans, comprehensive SOPs for FFP were adopted, emphasising the integration of gender analysis across all phases of firearms-related criminal intelligence.
- Gender considerations are essential to all key functions of FFPs, including:
 - Collection and integration of a comprehensive, up-to-date dataset on firearms intelligence,
 - Strategic intelligence assessments describing the scale and nature of firearms criminality,
 - Intelligence packages for tactical operations targeting the key aspects of firearms criminality, such as problem profiling, subject profiling and tactical assessments,
 - Foresight or horizon scanning,
 - Development of recommendations to divert and prevent firearms criminality.



3. Gender-Sensitive Data Collection

In the context of this Guide and the FFPs' Standard Operating Procedures, gender-sensitive data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering and categorising data in a way that recognises and reflects the gender aspects of firearms criminality and the distinct experiences and risks faced by women and men in this regard. It contributes to the creation of a gender-sensitive intelligence dataset on firearms and ballistics, which FFPs use in performing their functions.

Gender-sensitive data collection relies on gender-sensitive concepts and methods to ensure that the data collected are meaningful for advancing gender analysis, research, policy making, and operations. It seeks to avoid gender biases in methodologies, tools, or measurements, and prioritises the inclusion of issues critical to understanding gender equality in the context of SALW control.

3.1 Gender Statistics⁷

Gender-sensitive data collection produces **gender statistics**, which aim to capture the actual position of women and men in society and the specific realities of their lives. It should therefore adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the position of women and men across all areas of life.

Gender statistics also require an active effort to ensure that **statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analysed, and presented by sex and age, reflect issues and questions relevant to women and men in society**, and align with international commitments.

Gender statistics are crucial for advancing gender analysis, research, and evidence-based policies and operations. Institutions collect, analyse, and use these statistics to identify gaps, inform policy and operations, and monitor progress over time.

Within the context of SALW control, gender statistics should adequately reflect how women and men experience patterns of offending and victimisation, the specific risks they face regarding firearms, particularly in relation to gender-based violence, as well as patterns of firearms distribution.

Gender statistics include several types of data:

a) Sex-disaggregated data.

These are data collected and categorised by sex, an individual characteristic commonly recorded in censuses, surveys, and administrative records as a primary and general classification. Sex-disaggregated statistics are data that are collected, analysed, and presented or tabulated separately for women and men.

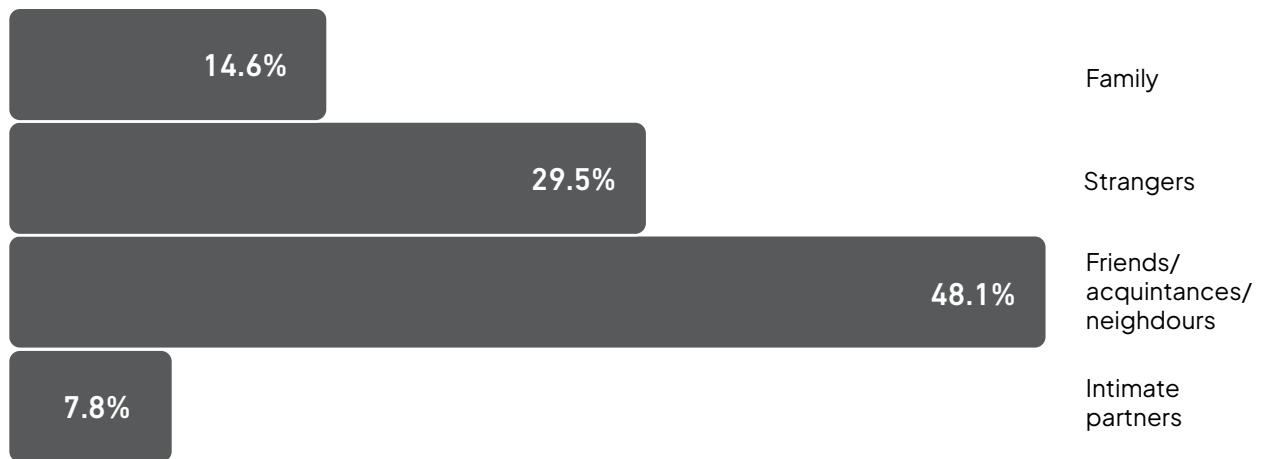
Example: the number of firearm owners or the number of firearm homicide victims disaggregated by sex (women/men).

⁷ This section draws on UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2016, Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics and UN Women, 2024, Gender Statistics Training Curriculum

Sex-disaggregated data are a starting point—when analysed, they can reveal differences in women’s and men’s lives that result from gender roles and expectations. By disaggregating data or collecting disaggregated data, FFPs can uncover trends or correlations that might otherwise remain hidden in aggregated data, enabling them to identify and define specific problems more effectively.

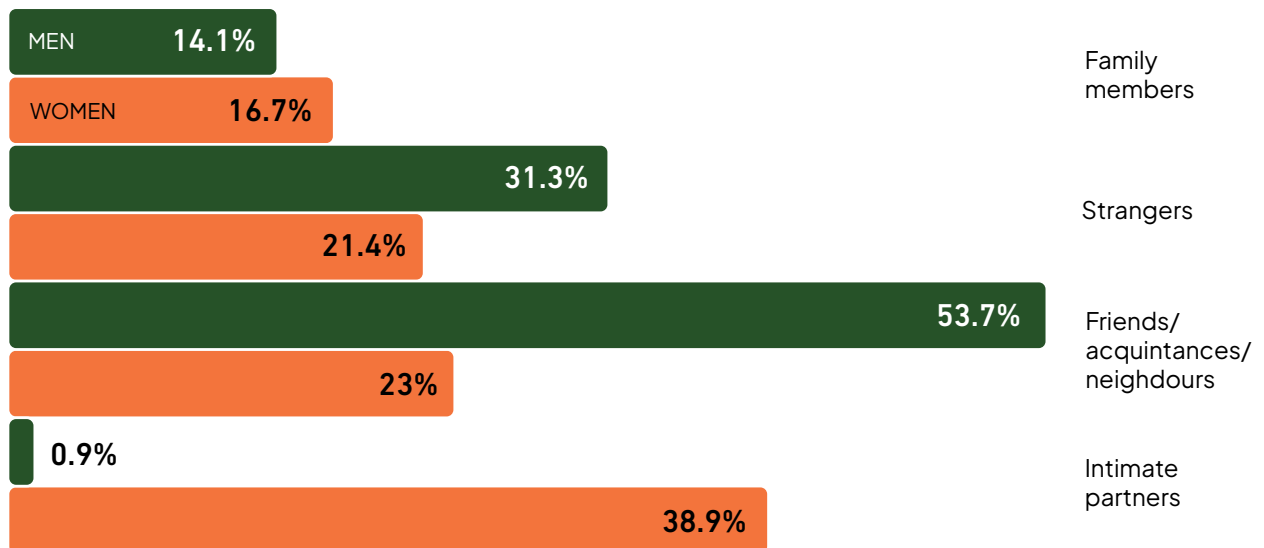
For example, aggregated data on the relationship between victims and offenders reveal that firearm-related incidents most commonly occur between friends, acquaintances, or neighbours, followed by strangers, then family members, and lastly, intimate partners (Figure 1).

Figure 1: **Relationship between victims and perpetrators in firearm-related incidents**



However, when this data is disaggregated by sex, distinct experiences and risk patterns emerge. It shows that women are significantly more vulnerable to firearms misuse in situations involving domestic violence, while men face greater risks of violence in other contexts. Notably, the disaggregated data reveal that women are 40 times more likely than men to experience firearms misuse by their intimate partners, emphasising the importance of developing tailored and informed responses to address these gender-specific risks.

Figure 2: **Relationship between victims and perpetrators, by sex of victim**



In addition to disaggregation by sex, data should also be **disaggregated by age**, as many patterns, behaviours, and impacts vary significantly with age. For example, in the context of firearms criminality, young men aged 18–30 are disproportionately more exposed to armed violence, both as offenders and as victims. Without consistent sex- and age-disaggregated data, these critical concerns remain invisible, hindering the development and implementation of effective preventive measures.

Further disaggregation of data enables more detailed insights and development of a more comprehensive intelligence picture. Where appropriate, and in compliance with the applicable data privacy legislation, other variables could also be recorded, such as disability, ethnicity, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, place of residence, socio-economic status, and others.

Data disaggregated by at least sex and age is a prerequisite for understanding the gender-specific impacts of small arms misuse, and for designing evidence-based, gender-responsive initiatives to address them. Without accurate information on the different risks that small arms present to women and men and their specific security needs, small arms control interventions risk being gender-blind, which may hamper their ability to achieve results that are beneficial to women and girls.⁸

b) Data pertaining specifically to women or men

This refers to information collected about specific characteristics, experiences, behaviours, or conditions that are unique to, or predominantly affect, either women or men. This type of data goes beyond general population statistics to focus specifically on the distinct realities of each sex, which can be shaped by biological, social, cultural, or economic factors.

In the context of this Guide, firearm-related femicides—defined as the killing of a woman by a man motivated by hatred of women, contempt, pleasure, a sense of ownership, or power over women—are an example of such data.

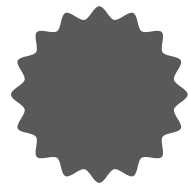
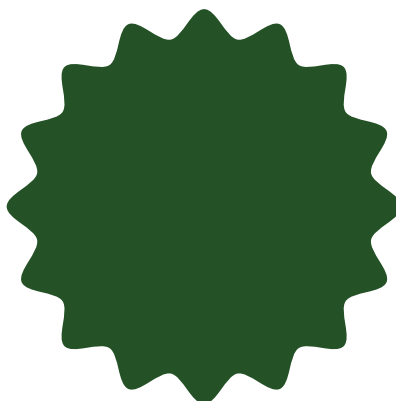
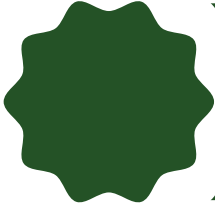
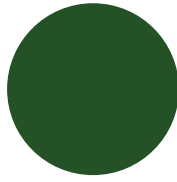
c) Data that reflect gender issues

Regarding this type of data, it is important to note that some statistics that provide a gender perspective are not necessarily disaggregated by sex, but still reflect gender issues. For example, the disproportionate impact of firearm misuse in domestic violence against women is a gender issue. Therefore, *data on the number of firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence, or on how many firearm licences were revoked on the grounds of intimate partner or domestic violence* reflect gender issues, even if the data itself is not sex-disaggregated. Further examples of such data are provided later in the Guide.

The importance of gender statistics is also recognised in gender equality laws across the Western Balkans, which require that statistical data and records collected, recorded, and processed in public authorities and institutions at all levels must be disaggregated by sex.

Key Takeaways

- Gender-sensitive data collection is the systematic gathering and categorisation of data that accounts for the specific experiences and risks faced by women and men in relation to firearms and firearm-related crimes.
- Gender statistics should accurately reflect how women and men experience patterns of offending and victimisation, the specific risks they face regarding firearms, particularly in relation to gender-based violence, as well as patterns of firearms distribution.
- Gender statistics include data disaggregated by sex, data pertaining specifically to women and men, and data that reflect gender issues.
- For FFPs, collecting and analysing all three types of data is equally important.
- By incorporating these components, gender-sensitive data collection ensures that policies and interventions effectively address the distinct needs and experiences of both women and men.



4. Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is a systematic analytical process used to identify, understand, and describe the gender aspects of a specific issue, its gender dynamics, and the relevance of gender roles and power dynamics in a particular context.⁹

Using sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, **gender analysis provides the necessary inputs and recommendations to integrate a gender perspective into policies, programmes, and operations (EIGE)**. Conducting a gender analysis enables the development of interventions that address gender inequalities and meet the different needs of women and men.

Gender analysis examines the qualitative differences between women and men within a specific context. It improves our understanding of the roles and positions of men and women in a particular area, clarifying their roles and the power dynamics within the broader community. By analysing these relationships, roles, and power structures, gender analysis identifies factors contributing to vulnerability. This approach helps avoid incorrect assumptions and ensures we do not presume that everyone will benefit equally from an intervention. It highlights how men and women may be affected differently by their circumstances or may contribute differently to improving their own situations. Such knowledge is key to designing effective programmes.¹⁰

In the context of small arms, gender analysis is the main tool used to identify how gender dynamics and patterns are linked to firearms criminality, and the specific risks that women and men face in this regard.¹¹

Within the scope of the FFPs, the purpose of gender analysis is to identify and explain gender patterns and examine the impact of gender norms, roles, and dynamics concerning:

- Offending patterns,
- Pathways to crime, including the impact of gender roles and expectations,
- Risk and protective factors in the context of firearms criminality,
- Firearms-related violence, and the role of firearms in domestic violence,
- Demand and distribution of firearms, both legal and illegal, as well as the types of ammunition used.

In doing so, gender analysis aims to acknowledge the specific risks women and men face, provide a better understanding of the nature, magnitude, severity, and frequency of firearms criminality, **examine its underlying causes**, and ensure that the needs of both women and men are identified and addressed at all stages of the policy and operational cycle. In this way, gender analysis contributes to the improved gender responsiveness in operations, policies, and legislation.

⁹ UNDP, How to Conduct a Gender Analysis in Country Programmes: A Quick Guidance for UNDP Staff.

¹⁰ UNSDG, 2019, Gender Mainstreaming.

¹¹ UNODA, 2022, Training Manual on Gender Mainstreaming in SALW Control, page 69.

How Does Gender Analysis Work?

Gender analysis is facilitated by specialised analytical tools and can be conducted at any stage to improve the understanding and effectiveness of operations and policies. This process involves various approaches and methodologies. A comprehensive toolbox of practical methods, such as manuals, checklists, and instructions for gender analysis, has been developed. These resources are widely available and can be tailored to the specific context in which the analysis is applied, ensuring relevance and adaptability to diverse environments and objectives.

Generally, gender analysis is a process involving several steps:

1. Data collection,
2. Identifying and explaining gender patterns in a specific context, which helps build an understanding of different patterns and the implications of these differences,
3. Using the findings to inform policies and operations.

Gender analysis depends on the quality and quantity of gender-sensitive, sex- and age-disaggregated data and information. These are essential for any gender analysis, as they provide the evidence base for designing, implementing, and monitoring gender-responsive, effective, and sustainable small arms programmes.¹²

4.1 Gender Analysis and Crime Analysis

In the context of the work of FFPs, gender analysis is closely linked to crime analysis and supports it by identifying recurring problems, prioritising those that need addressing, understanding the contributing factors, developing and implementing tailored solutions, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Therefore, for FFPs, gender analysis should not be seen as separate from crime analysis, but rather as an integral part of it—crime analysis that incorporates gender as a critical analytical category.

In this sense, gender analysis is compatible with and enhances criminal intelligence analysis as the study of crime patterns and trends to solve crimes or prevent their recurrence.¹³

Applying a gender perspective to information collection and analysis sheds light to potentially overlooked signs of instability. Gender analysis is especially useful for intelligence services to understand social relations, social networks, and the dynamics of violence and criminality.¹⁴

¹² Ibid., page 50.

¹³ Council of Europe 2002, Crime Analysis.

¹⁴ DCAF, 2020, Intelligence and Gender.

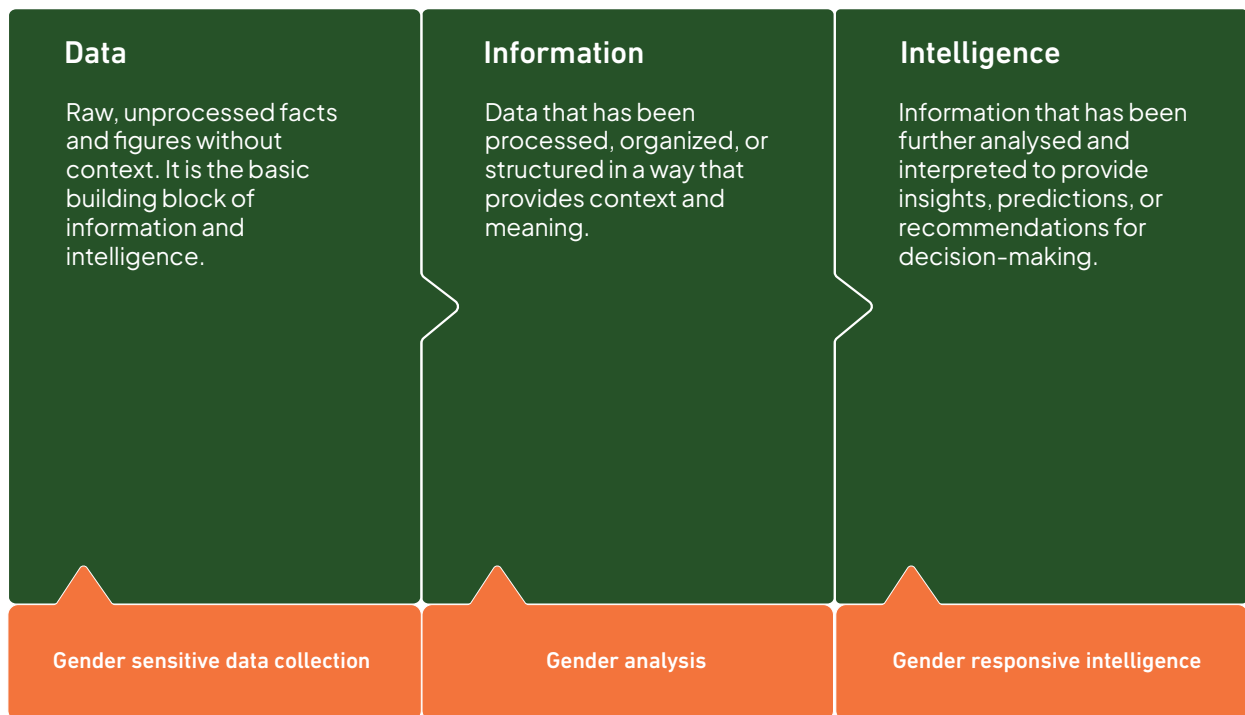
4.2 From Data to Intelligence: The Role of Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is essential for transforming raw data into meaningful intelligence, including data on firearms and firearms criminality. It provides a more comprehensive understanding of specific issues by examining data from a gender perspective and identifying trends, patterns, risks, dynamics, and impacts.

As shown in the figure below, gender-sensitive data collection should be an integral part of FFPs' data collection activities, with sex and age (and possibly other categories, as discussed previously) systematically included as variables when collecting data on individuals. This approach improves the quality of the data collected.

When the data collected are organised and disaggregated by sex and age, they are transformed into information that offers meaning and context, revealing the different impacts or experiences of women and men with firearms.

Further application of gender analysis helps identify gender patterns and their underlying causes, while also providing recommendations for decision-making. This process transforms data and information into actionable intelligence that is both meaningful and gender-responsive. By revealing crime patterns, identifying trends, defining problems, and offering evidence-based recommendations, gender analysis plays a crucial role in addressing firearms crime effectively.



Gender analysis supports both tactical analysis, which focuses on recent criminal incidents to identify patterns and develop leads, and long-term strategic analysis, which incorporates broader socio-demographic factors to reveal long-term **crime** trends.

Finally, the more detailed the analysis, the better the intelligence picture. **Intersectional gender analysis**¹⁵ examines how different aspects of a person's identity, in addition to sex and age, combine to shape their experiences and challenges. It shows how overlapping factors can create specific risks or disadvantages. This approach helps ensure that policies and programmes address the needs of different groups, especially those facing multiple forms of disadvantage.

4.3 Step-by-Step Guidelines for the Integration of Gender Analysis in FFPs Operations

The proposed methodology outlined below builds upon SEESAC's extensively tested approaches and tools, including [A Practical Tool for Integrating the Gender Perspective in SALW Legislative and Policy Frameworks](#), the [Guidelines for the Gender Analysis of Legislation and Policies Relevant to Small Arms Control](#), as well as SEESAC's extensive experience in conducting gender analyses within the SALW control context. It also draws on a comprehensive range of resources, including checklists, data collection guidelines, and gender analysis methodologies such as Method 4R.¹⁶ Furthermore, it incorporates key insights from SEESAC's *Training on Critical Thinking Skills and Analytical Capacities* and the *Analysis Training for Firearms Focal Points* delivered in 2022 and 2024. Building on these foundations, the tools have been carefully tailored to align with the specific roles and responsibilities of FFPs, ensuring their practical relevance and effectiveness.

The proposed methodology is organised into six interconnected steps and closely builds on skills used by the FFPs in their work, such as brainstorming, critical thinking, hypothesis development, and testing.

Step 1. Collect data - Gain insight in the position of women and men.

Step 2. Identify gender patterns - Analyse existing data to identify gender-specific patterns.

Step 3. Analyse underlying causes - Examine the factors behind the identified patterns.

Step 4. Respond to the identified patterns - Propose measures to address the identified gender patterns.

Step 5. Consolidate a gender-responsive intelligence picture.

Step 6. Monitor trends and evaluate response.

¹⁵ United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, 2025, Intersectionality Informed Gender Analysis Toolkit.

¹⁶ Swedish Government Official Reports, 2007, Gender Mainstreaming Manual - A book of practical methods from the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee (JämStöd).

To conduct a gender analysis, the FFP should begin by researching the issue at hand and identifying whether other agencies have encountered and addressed a similar challenge or if researchers have studied it. Examining how they analysed the problem, the actions they took, and most importantly, which of their responses were effective and which were not, can provide valuable insights. Learning from the efforts of others enables the FFP to develop useful hypotheses to test when addressing its own issue.¹⁷

17 Clark, Ronald V., and John E. Eck, 2016, *Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers in 60 Small Steps*, Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Step 1: Collect Data - Gain Insight in the Position of Women and Men

Objective: To systematically collect and record sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific statistics related to firearms, firearms criminality, and the specific issue being addressed. This step ensures the visibility of gender concerns, forms the foundation for evidence-based analysis, and supports the development of effective, gender-responsive strategies and interventions.

Gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data are prerequisites for understanding the gendered aspects of firearms and firearms criminality, and form the basis for evidence-based responses, both tactical and strategic. If such data are unavailable, gender concerns will remain invisible, and understanding of the problem may be inadequate, thus limiting the effectiveness of operational responses.

Without information on the specific risks that women and men face regarding firearms, and the differences in their security needs that must be addressed, these issues may be overlooked.

Given that the FFP serves as a repository for firearms-related intelligence and collects and integrates comprehensive, up-to-date, and gender-responsive intelligence, the first step is to ensure that:

- a) **When receiving or recording information on an individual incident, accident, or event** involving a weapon, essential component, ammunition, or part of ammunition that has been discharged, used, or found, the FFP should ensure that at a minimum the following data are recorded in the dataset:
 - Sex and age of perpetrator(s)
 - Sex and age of victim(s)
 - Victim's relationship with perpetrator(s) (for example, intimate partner, family member, acquaintance, neighbour, other perpetrator known to victim, perpetrator not known to victim, unknown relationship between victim and perpetrator)
 - Outcome for victim(s) (for example, killed, injured, threatened, none of these)
 - Outcome for perpetrator(s) (for example, arrested, remained at large, injured, killed)
 - Information on the type of incident, ensuring that domestic violence is included in the classification of incidents
 - Sex and age of any other individuals involved should be recorded and entered into the database

- b) **Ensure that the same set of data is recorded when information is requested from other law enforcement databases** (such as incident reports, criminal intelligence reports, crime reports, forensic reports, etc).

In all such situations, the FFP should ensure that the essential data related to offending and victimisation, listed under item (a), are collected and collated.

- c) In addition, as highlighted, the **data collected should document the main gender issues as discussed previously**, particularly in relation to:
- Offending,
 - Victimisation and gender-specific risks faced by women and men regarding firearms,
 - Use of firearms in the context of gender-based violence,
 - Firearms ownership and demand.
- d) **With regard to data from firearms licensing and registration databases, the FFP should ensure the following data is available:**
- Sex- and age-disaggregated data on firearms licence holders.
 - Sex- and age-disaggregated data on new applicants for firearms licences.
 - Sex-disaggregated data on firearms licence holders and those whose licences have been revoked.
 - Sex- and age-disaggregated data on owners whose firearms have been lost or stolen.
 - Sex- and age-disaggregated data on applicants for firearms licences whose applications have been rejected, including the grounds for rejection (such as domestic violence).
 - Sex- and age-disaggregated data on persons whose firearms have been seized or confiscated.
- e) **Identify other relevant data sources in each context that could support the FFP and help develop a gender-responsive intelligence picture.**

Such sources could include:

- **The Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP)**, operated by SEESAC, systematically monitors firearms-related incidents in South East Europe. Since 2014, it has collected detailed data from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The AVMP data is gathered daily from a combination of official sources, including the websites of law enforcement institutions and ministries of interior, as well as from online and print media. Data on firearm incidents is categorised according to standardised definitions to ensure consistency and comparability across jurisdictions and reporting periods. Each incident is reviewed and analysed using a methodology developed by SEESAC. The AVMP provides data on the type of incident, firearms used, sex of the victim and perpetrator, their relationship, location of the incident, and other variables. The analysis incorporates key findings from SEESAC's *In Focus Armed Violence Monitors on Firearm Incidents in the Context of Domestic Violence in SEE*, covering cases from 2019 onwards. The AVMP routinely generates sex- and age-

disaggregated data and provides both information on individual incidents and statistically aggregated data.

- **Databases of jurisdictional statistical offices.** These databases provide valuable aggregated data sources on many issues central to FFPs, such as:
 - Judiciary statistics, which provide data on adult and juvenile perpetrators of criminal offences, including firearm-related offences. These statistics offer basic information on criminal offences committed by juvenile and adult perpetrators: individuals reported, charged, and convicted by type of offence, sex, age, and criminal sanctions. Data are collected through regular statistical surveys based on individual questionnaires completed by the competent public prosecutor’s offices and courts.
 - Reports on violent deaths that provide data on violent deaths (suicides, homicides, accidental deaths) according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, and also provide data on firearms-related violent deaths.
- **Databases of other international organisations,** such as UNODC databases,
- **Data collected by civil society organisations.**

f) Identify where data is missing, or further data is needed.

FFPs should assess their current datasets to identify where gender-sensitive data is missing or where additional data is needed. They should implement standardised procedures to ensure future data collection includes essential information such as sex, age, the relationship between victims and perpetrators, and similar details. Where critical data gaps persist, FFPs can engage with other entities that collect relevant data to address these needs effectively and efficiently.

Box 2: Small Arms and Light Weapons Surveys 2012 -2016 and Gender and SALW Fast Facts

In 2017, SEESAC established a Regional Working Group comprising representatives from seven SALW commissions in the region. The Group was tasked with developing and agreeing on a standardised methodology for conducting a regional SALW survey. Data on the distribution and impact of SALW were gathered and analysed using standardised SALW distribution and impact questionnaires. This data collection process was coordinated by SALW Commissions, with technical support from SEESAC. The questionnaires included standardised questions designed to ensure the collection of accurate and up-to-date information, enhancing the coherence, standardisation, and comparability of data across the region.

Crucially, all data collected on individuals were disaggregated by sex and age, enabling comprehensive gender-responsive analysis of SALW distribution and impact. This approach provided critical insights into

the differentiated impacts on various demographic groups, significantly contributing to evidence-based policymaking, particularly in the development of SALW control strategies and action plans.

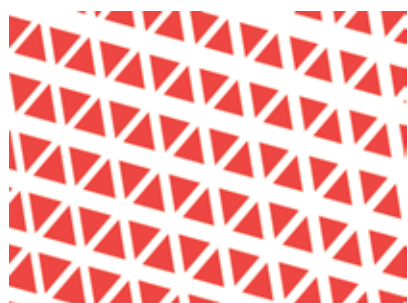
The surveys comprehensively captured sex- and age-disaggregated data on firearms ownership, motivations for acquiring firearms, security sector personnel authorised to carry firearms, and victims and perpetrators of SALW-related offences. They also addressed specific gender considerations, such as connections between firearms and intimate partner violence or domestic violence. In doing so, the surveys highlighted the distinct gendered impacts of SALW on men and women, as well as the broader gendered dynamics surrounding firearms misuse and demand. This robust methodology demonstrates how integrating gender-sensitive approaches in data collection can drive the development of holistic and

effective policy solutions. The findings of the surveys were extensively used in the development of SALW control strategies in the region.

Building on this data, SEESAC developed the *Gender and Small Arms Fast Facts* series, which documents the various links between gender and SALW in South East Europe. The series outlines specific risks faced by women and men regarding firearms, providing an overview of sex-disaggregated data on ownership, access, demand, and the impact of firearms, including their misuse in domestic violence contexts. By improving

access to such data, *Fast Facts* aims to enhance knowledge and awareness among professionals and the general public about the highly gendered aspects of small arms. The series also serves as a practical, evidence-based tool for policymakers, supporting the mainstreaming of gender in small arms control legislation and policies.

All knowledge products, including detailed SALW Survey Questionnaires, are available at SEESAC's SALW knowledge base.



GENDER AND
SMALL ARMS

: FAST FACTS



THE MISUSE OF
FIREARMS IN
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
IN SOUTH EAST
EUROPE

: FAST FACTS



MEN AND
FIREARMS
IN SOUTH EAST
EUROPE

: FAST FACTS

Step 2: Gender-Responsive Intelligence - Identify Gender Patterns

Objective: To identify gender patterns in a specific firearm-related issue by using gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data.

In the context of this Guide, gender patterns refer to recurring and systematic trends or behaviours related to women's and men's experiences with firearms, including their use and misuse, impact and exposure to armed violence, risks and victimisation, as well as possession and demand for firearms. These patterns demonstrate that the specific situations and experiences of women and men are not random or isolated, but are shaped by broader, entrenched social, cultural, economic, institutional, and security-related factors, including firearms control and availability.

Gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data, when analysed, can reveal differences in the positions of women and men resulting from gender roles and expectations.

In this step, the FFP should use the available gender statistics to identify prevailing gender patterns and address the question: What kinds of gender patterns can be observed in these data?

If gender statistics are collected or available, they allow the identification of prevailing gender patterns, making it easier to transform raw data into information and, consequently, intelligence. At this stage, the FFP should rely on brainstorming and critical thinking techniques to identify trends.

Orientation questions to guide the analysis and facilitate the identification of patterns could include:

Victimisation and Risks

1. *What is the current situation for women and men regarding specific issues related to firearms and firearms criminality being analysed?*
2. *What are the observed trends in victimisation for men and women? How do firearms-related issues affect women compared to men:*
 - How many women and how many men are among the victims?
 - How do the contexts of firearm-related violence differ for women and men? Which types of incidents (for example, domestic violence, public disputes, criminal activity) present the greatest risk for women? For men?
 - In which of these incidents are firearms most frequently misused against women and men, respectively?
3. *How do the risks and types of victimisation linked to firearm misuse differ between women and men? Who poses the greatest threat to women, and who poses the greatest threat to men?*
4. *Are there specific groups of women or men (for example, young men, women in rural areas) who are more vulnerable to risks associated with firearms?*
5. *In what ways do firearms play a role in domestic violence or intimate partner violence compared with other types of violence?*
6. *How does firearm-related gender-based violence affect women, particularly in the contexts of intimate partner violence and domestic abuse?*
7. *What are the most common types of firearms used in violent incidents against women and men? Are there any differences in their legal status (legal or illegal)?*

Offending

1. *How many women and how many men are among the perpetrators?*
2. *How do patterns of firearm-related offending differ between men and women in terms of types of crimes committed, circumstances surrounding the crimes, and other relevant factors?*
3. *Are there age-related trends or other risk factors (for example, are young men more likely to offend with firearms?) that should be addressed?*

Case Study: Firearms and Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans

As previously mentioned, SEESAC's Armed Violence Monitoring Platform provides a comprehensive dataset of firearm-related incidents in the Western Balkans. For each recorded incident, data on victims and perpetrators are disaggregated by sex and age and systematically documented within the platform, enabling a thorough gender analysis. The AVMP also provides data on the type of incident, outcomes for both victims and perpetrators, the nature of their relationship, and the type of weapons used. Using data from the AVMP, SEESAC conducted an in-depth analysis of firearm misuse in the context of domestic violence from 2019 to 2023, demonstrating how gender analysis can be used to develop a comprehensive intelligence picture.

The example is introduced by step analysis:

Step 1: Collect Data - Gain Insight in the Position of Women and Men

1. *In total, 452 firearm incidents occurred in domestic violence, 2,461 in a criminal context, 1,375 in public disputes, 888 in accidents, hunting, or celebratory shootings, 153 in disputes with the police, 2,611 were undetermined shootings, and there were 6,474 weapon seizures.*
2. *In the same period, 152 people were killed in domestic violence, 144 in a criminal context, 135 in public disputes, 64 in accidents, celebratory shootings, or hunting, 29 in mass shootings, 15 in disputes with the police, and 142 in undetermined shootings classified as other.*
3. *If the data is further disaggregated by both the sex of the victims and the specific type of incident, it shows the number of fatalities as follows:*
 - *Domestic violence: 93 women and 59 men.*
 - *Criminal context: 12 women and 131 men.*
 - *Public disputes: 1 woman and 134 men.*
 - *Accidental incidents: 7 women and 57 men.*
 - *Mass shootings: 10 women and 19 men.*
 - *Disputes with the police: 15 men and 0 women.*
4. *In total, 267 perpetrators of firearm incidents in domestic violence were men, and 7 were women.*
5. *If data on the relationship of the victim to perpetrators is available, that will further*

facilitate the analysis and enable us to better understand the specific risks and dynamics of firearms crime in this context.

6. In total, 71 women and 2 men were killed with firearms by their intimate partners, while 20 women and 49 men were killed by other male family members.
7. Handguns were used in 203 incidents; rifles and shotguns in 71 incidents (55 of which involved hunting weapons); multiple SALW were documented in 47 incidents; and automatic or military-grade weapons in 41 incidents. Explosives were reported in 12 incidents, and gas pistols and air guns were each reported in 11 cases.
8. In 174 incidents, weapons in illegal possession were used, while in 26 incidents, weapons were legally owned. For 252 incidents, information on the type of ownership was not available.

Step 2: Identify Gender Patterns

Where gender-disaggregated statistics and information on weapons are available, they make it possible to identify clear gender patterns. At this stage, it is recommended to define these gender patterns clearly and concisely on the basis of the available data.

- Pattern 1: The misuse of firearms in domestic violence is reported less often than in other types of incidents.*
- Pattern 2: Domestic violence accounts for the highest number of firearm-related deaths.*
- Pattern 3: Women constitute the majority of victims of firearm-related deaths.*
- Pattern 4: Men are most at risk in criminal contexts and public disputes, while women are disproportionately affected in domestic violence contexts.*
- Pattern 5: In the context of domestic violence, women are most at risk from intimate partners, while men are more likely to be at risk from other male family members.*
- Pattern 6: Handguns were most frequently used in domestic violence incidents, followed by hunting weapons.*
- Pattern 7: Illegal weapons were used more frequently in domestic violence than legal weapons. However, information on the type of ownership was mostly missing.*

Step 3: Analyse Underlying Causes – Examine the Factors Behind the Identified Patterns

Objective: To conduct an in-depth analysis of the underlying factors that contribute to observed gender patterns in firearm-related criminality and violence. This step builds on the findings from **Step 2** (identifying gender patterns) by asking “**Why is this so?**” to reveal the root causes of these differences and provide actionable insights. The aim is to understand the gender, social, and firearms-related dynamics driving these patterns and to develop a comprehensive intelligence picture.

Orientation Questions:

1. *To what extent do gender norms and roles influence the type and frequency of firearms misuse in a specific context, such as domestic violence?*
2. *What role do firearms play in power dynamics (within domestic and intimate partner violence), and how does this disproportionately affect women and men?*
3. *What is the role of firearms in a specific problem being analysed, such as domestic violence? How do firearms increase the risk in domestic violence?*
4. *How do gender inequalities shape women’s and men’s exposure to firearm-related violence?*

Case study: Firearms and Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans

The SEESAC’s analysis, mentioned above, used both quantitative and qualitative methods (such as focus group discussion and in-depth interviews) to identify **several factors explaining the patterns found in Step 2:**

1. *The presence of firearms further reduces the already low rates of reporting domestic violence.*
2. *Women often refrain from reporting domestic violence, especially when firearms are involved, due to fears of escalation and retaliation by the abuser.*

3. *Violence frequently goes unreported in its initial stages, which can lead to even more severe consequences for victims over time.*
4. *Firearms serve as tools of coercion and control in abusive relationships, reinforcing power imbalances and gender hierarchies.*
5. *Women are more likely to report violence only when they believe their lives or the lives of their children are in immediate danger.*
6. *The likelihood of a lethal outcome increases due to:*
 - *The severity of gunshot-inflicted injuries,*
 - *The limited ability of women to resist or escape,*
 - *The reduced likelihood of intervention by others, and*
 - *The heightened risk of the abuser using the firearm.*
7. *In incidents involving illegal firearms, victims often withhold critical information out of fear of retaliation or potential legal repercussions for the perpetrator.*
8. *Cultural norms linking firearms with masculinity and male identity can deter the reporting of domestic violence and firearm misuse.*
9. *Abusers often use firearms and explosives to assert or reassert control over victims, especially when they feel their power is being challenged.*
10. *Current risk assessment procedures for domestic violence often fail to adequately consider the specific risks posed by firearms.*
11. *Firearms licensing procedures do not sufficiently account for the potential misuse of firearms in domestic violence situations.*

Step 4: Respond to the Identified Gender Patterns

Objective: To propose and implement practical measures that effectively address the identified gender patterns and their underlying causes. Building on the gender analysis conducted in previous steps, this stage focuses on using insights to develop concrete tactical and strategic actions to resolve the problem. Recommendations resulting from gender analysis may be both reactive or preventive.

For example, based on the insights gained in previous steps, **possible recommendations to law enforcement agencies may include:**

- *Ensure that, in every reported case of domestic violence, the presence of firearms is always verified without exception—regardless of whether they were used—and that the responding officer documents any information about the presence or use of firearms in the report.*
- *Ensure that risk assessment procedures are in place and conducted properly and promptly for every reported case of domestic violence, as required by the Istanbul Convention and applicable legislation in each jurisdiction.*
- *Ensure that risk assessment considers all specific situations involving firearms, such as: whether the perpetrator or another household member (including the victim) legally possesses a weapon; whether the perpetrator or another household member may illegally possess a weapon; whether the perpetrator has access to firearms as part of occupational duties and is trained in their use; or whether the perpetrator could easily access firearms.*
- *Ensure that any legally owned weapons in the possession of a perpetrator are seized without exception in each reported incident, as required by weapons and domestic violence laws, with due procedures initiated, while any illegally owned weapons are immediately confiscated.*
- *Ensure that, in the case of a reported incident, any weapons to which a perpetrator can easily access, such as those possessed by other family members or persons sharing the same residence, or any other easily accessible weapon, are immediately seized.*
- *Ensure that first responders have reliable, instant, and 24/7 access to up-to-date firearm registration databases to support effective and timely interventions, addressing current limitations in access and reliability.*
- *Ensure the weapons registry is comprehensive and up to date, with accurate records of all firearm owners and their registered firearms. Regular audits should be conducted to maintain the reliability of the registry and ensure compliance with firearm regulations.*
- *In addition to criminal and misdemeanour records, ensure that police operational logs, as well as any information on imposed temporary protective measures and restraining orders, are duly considered when reviewing applications for acquiring firearms.*

- *Introduce the practice of notifying immediate family members, including partners, about any application for acquiring a firearm submitted by their family member or partner. Such notifications must take into consideration safety risks to family members.*
- *Enhance background check procedures by integrating mandatory interviews with family members, including current or recent former intimate partners, as well as friends, neighbours, or associates, before approval or renewal of a firearm licence.*
- *Given the prevalence of misuse of illicit firearms in domestic violence, ensure that weapons used in such incidents are adequately traced and technically examined so that this knowledge informs policy development and operational response. Systematically tracing every seized firearm enhances the overall intelligence picture on illicit firearms at both local and international levels.*

Step 5: Consolidate a Gender-Responsive Intelligence Picture

Objective: To combine all findings from the previous steps into a unified and actionable intelligence picture.

This will help decision makers make informed and effective decisions that address the identified gender dynamics and underlying causes of firearms-related issues. The information gathered and analysed in earlier stages, such as disaggregated data, identified gender patterns, and insights into the underlying causes of firearm misuse, provides the foundation for this step. Consolidating these data ensures a clear, evidence-based understanding of gender dynamics in firearm-related incidents. This refined intelligence framework enables targeted responses and strategic action to address the identified gender-specific issues effectively.

To achieve this, the FFP should:

- Aggregate and compile all data collected in Step 1.
- Highlight the key gender patterns identified in Step 2 and insights from Step 3 that reveal underlying causes contributing to these patterns, particularly regarding gender patterns of victimisation, offending, firearm misuse, and risks.
- Include the measures proposed in Step 4 to address the identified patterns.

If we consolidate our findings and identify gender patterns, this will provide a robust intelligence picture. Below is an example of how such intelligence could look like:

From 2019 to 2023, more people were killed in firearm incidents related to domestic violence (152—93 women and 59 men) than in any other category of incidents covered by the Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP), exceeding fatalities

in criminal contexts (144) and public disputes (135). While a significant number of both women and men were killed in a domestic context (93 women and 59 men), the disproportionate impact of firearm misuse in domestic violence on women is particularly evident in the breakdown of firearm fatalities by incident type. In the region, 68.4% of women killed with firearms were killed in a domestic violence context—a figure nearly eight times higher than those killed in criminal activities. In the same period, 10.9% of men killed with firearms in the region were killed by their family members.

Within the context of domestic violence, women and men face gender-specific risks. Women are most at risk of firearm use by their current or recent intimate partners, while men are more at risk from other male family members.

In the Western Balkans, 50.7% of women killed with firearms were killed by their intimate partner. In the same period, this was true for only 0.4% of all men killed with weapons. Women are three times more likely to be killed by their current or recent intimate partners than by their former partners.

The high number of lethal outcomes in domestic violence cases contrasts with the relatively low number of reported incidents, highlighting the specific risks associated with firearms, which increase the likelihood of fatal outcomes.

The misuse of firearms in domestic violence is reported significantly less often than other types of firearm-related incidents, such as those occurring in criminal contexts, public disputes, or undetermined shootings. From 2019 to 2023, firearm-related incidents in domestic violence accounted for only 3.1% of all reported firearm incidents, with this trend persisting throughout the analysed period.

Handguns were used in 203 incidents, rifles and shotguns in 71 (including 55 hunting weapons), multiple SALW in 47, and automatic or military-grade weapons in 41. Explosives were reported in 12 incidents, while gas pistols and air guns were each reported in 11 cases.

Among recorded incidents, illegal weapons were the most frequently reported. However, given the underreporting of domestic violence, these findings should be interpreted with caution, as the misuse of legally owned firearms may be underreported, particularly when they are not used for assault or when the outcomes are not life-threatening.

The identified patterns can be attributed to several interconnected factors:

1. *The presence of firearms further reduces the already low rates of reporting domestic violence.*
2. *Women often refrain from reporting domestic violence, especially when firearms are involved, due to fears of escalation and retaliation by the abuser.*
3. *Violence frequently goes unreported in its initial stages, which can result in even more severe consequences for victims over time.*
4. *Firearms serve as tools of coercion and control in abusive relationships, reinforcing power imbalances and gender hierarchies.*
5. *Women are more likely to report violence only when they believe their own lives or those of their children are in immediate danger.*

6. *The likelihood of a fatal outcome increases due to:*
 - The severity of gunshot-inflicted injuries,
 - The limited ability of women to resist or escape,
 - The reduced likelihood of intervention by others, and
 - A heightened risk of the abuser using the firearm.
7. *In incidents involving illegal firearms, victims often withhold critical information out of fear of retaliation or potential legal repercussions for the perpetrator.*
8. *Cultural norms associating firearms with masculinity and male identity can deter the reporting of domestic violence and firearm misuse.*
9. *Abusers often use firearms and explosives to assert or reassert control over a victim, especially when they feel their power is being challenged.*
10. *Current risk assessment procedures for responding to domestic violence often fail to adequately consider the specific risks posed by firearms.*
11. *Firearms licensing procedures do not sufficiently account for the potential misuse of firearms in domestic violence situations.*
12. *In conflict settings, firearms can significantly increase the risks of gender-based violence and heighten women’s vulnerability.*

To address these factors, the FFP recommends the following:

- *Ensure that, in every reported case of domestic violence, the presence of firearms is always verified without exception—regardless of whether they were used—and that the responding officer documents any information about the presence or use of firearms in the report.*
- *Ensure that risk assessment procedures are in place and conducted properly and promptly for every reported case of domestic violence, as required by the Istanbul Convention and applicable legislation in each jurisdiction.*
- *Ensure that risk assessment considers all specific situations involving firearms, such as: whether the perpetrator or another household member (including the victim) legally possesses a weapon; whether the perpetrator or another household member may illegally possess a weapon; whether the perpetrator has access to firearms as part of occupational duties and is trained in their use; or whether the perpetrator could easily access firearms.*
- *Ensure that any legally owned weapons in the possession of a perpetrator are seized without exception in each reported incident, as required by weapons and domestic violence laws, with due procedures initiated, while any illegally owned weapons are immediately confiscated.*
- *Ensure that, in the case of a reported incident, any weapons to which a perpetrator can easily access, such as those possessed by other family members or persons sharing the same residence, or any other easily accessible weapon, are immediately seized.*

- *Ensure that first responders have reliable, instant, and 24/7 access to up-to-date firearm registration databases to support effective and timely interventions, addressing current limitations in access and reliability.*
- *Ensure the weapons registry is comprehensive and up to date, with accurate records of all firearm owners and their registered firearms. Regular audits should be conducted to maintain the reliability of the registry and ensure compliance with firearm regulations.*
- *In addition to criminal and misdemeanour records, ensure that police operational logs, as well as any information on imposed temporary protective measures and restraining orders, are duly considered when reviewing applications for acquiring firearms.*
- *Introduce the practice of notifying immediate family members, including partners, about any application for acquiring a firearm submitted by their family member or partner. Such notifications must take into consideration safety risks to family members.*
- *Enhance background check procedures by integrating mandatory interviews with family members, including current or recent former intimate partners, as well as friends, neighbours, or associates, before approval or renewal of a firearm licence.*
- *Given the prevalence of misuse of illicit firearms in domestic violence, ensure that weapons used in such incidents are adequately traced and technically examined so that this knowledge informs policy development and operational response. Systematically tracing every seized firearm enhances the overall intelligence picture on illicit firearms at both local and international levels.*

Step 6: Monitor Trends and Evaluate Response

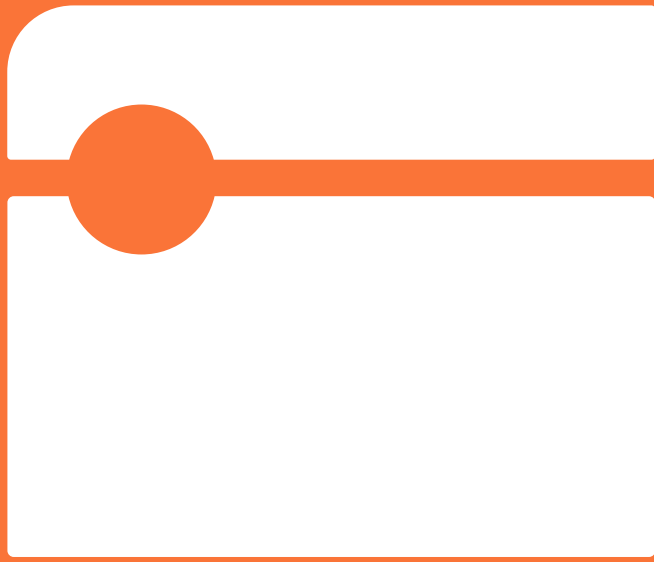
Objective: To ensure a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating trends in gender aspects of firearm-related criminality.

Regular data collection is essential because trends become visible only over time from a long-term perspective. This is particularly relevant for the gender aspects of firearms criminality, which are notably stable and therefore require a long-term and multisectoral approach.

In addition to providing a comprehensive understanding of firearms criminality, regular data collection facilitates the assessment of the effectiveness of measures undertaken to prevent firearms criminality and helps identify areas for improvement. Through the ongoing evaluation of intervention outcomes and systematic collection and analysis of disaggregated data, this step seeks to enhance prevention and response efforts while informing evidence-based policy development to address the evolving dynamics of firearm-related domestic violence.

Key Takeaways

- Gender analysis is the primary tool for identifying how gender dynamics and patterns relate to firearms criminality and the specific risks faced by women and men in this area.
- Gender analysis is compatible with, and enhances, criminal intelligence analysis by examining crime patterns and trends to solve crimes or prevent their recurrence.
- Gender analysis is essential for transforming raw data into meaningful and actionable intelligence.
- The step-by-step methodology offers detailed guidance to FFPs on conducting gender analysis.



5. The Use of Gender Analysis in Analytical Products of Firearms Focal Points

Gender analysis can enhance the FFP's key outputs by supporting investigators and informing strategic planning.

By highlighting the gender aspects of:

- patterns in offending,
- pathways to crime, including opportunities and constraints, gender roles and expectations,
- risk and protective factors in the context of firearms criminality,
- firearm-related violence, and the role of firearms in domestic violence,
- factors that fuel demand for firearms, both legal and illegal,

gender analysis can strengthen:

- operational assessments that support criminal investigations and criminal intelligence operations,
- strategic intelligence assessments describing the scale and nature of firearms criminality, such as:
 - monthly reports (disaggregated data on victims, perpetrators, crime motivations, gender-based violence),
 - subject profiling,
 - problem profiling,
 - trend analysis,
- threat assessments.

In addition, the FFPs shall contribute to informing the SALW control strategy by disseminating their intelligence products, which include appropriate gender analysis.

Case Study: Young Men's Exposure to Firearm- Related Violence - Using Gender Analysis for Problem and Subject Profiling

Young men are generally the demographic group most likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours and criminal activities, both of which often involve firearms. They

are more likely to misuse firearms than men in other age groups, and in the Western Balkans, nearly half of firearms incidents are committed by young men.

Men aged 16 to 24 are significantly more likely than those in other age groups to report recent experience with firearms. They are also more inclined to say they would own a firearm than men in other age groups. Additionally, 60.5% of men aged 16 to 24 believe they would feel safer with a firearm at home.

The tendency of males in their mid to late teens and twenties, especially those who are unmarried and unemployed, to engage in violent altercations to resolve seemingly trivial matters, to 'save face', to harm a rival, or otherwise to improve their social status is usually referred to as the **young male syndrome**.¹⁸ This behaviour pattern often results in a higher likelihood of firearm misuse among individuals in this demographic group.

A growing body of research has documented the link between specific masculine norms and violent behaviour.¹⁹ In recent years, studies on men's exposure to armed violence have highlighted connections between the prevailing understanding of masculinity and the demand for, and misuse of, firearms. **The dominant understanding of masculinity** refers to a set of attributes, behaviours, and roles commonly associated with boys and men in a given social, cultural, and historical context. These beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, places pressure on men to act according to certain expectations.²⁰ These pressures convey the message that men should be self-sufficient, act tough, adhere to rigid gender roles, be prepared to use violence to resolve conflicts, and avoid being feminine. Behaviours and roles related to masculinity or manhood typically emphasise strength, particularly physical strength, courage, readiness to take risks, including engaging in risky behaviours, independence, assertiveness, achievement, toughness, stoicism, success, the role of financial provider, and avoiding any appearance of weakness. Studies show that adherence to these messages and pressures may be linked to perpetrating and experiencing various forms of violence, as well as other destructive behaviours. It also involves using dominance, violence, sexual violence, and control to assert power and superiority.²¹ **Furthermore, power and control are central concepts in defining the dominant understanding of masculinity.**²²

In this context, firearms can be particularly appealing to young men, as they often associate weapons with masculinity, especially with power and control.²³ Young men often view firearms as a means of attaining the social and economic status they believe they deserve. Those who are denied regular opportunities for social and economic advancement appear especially susceptible to the symbolic appeal of guns. The symbolic attraction of firearms can be very strong, particularly for

18 See: American Psychological Association, Dictionary of Psychology.

19 Brian Heilman with Gary Barker, 2018, Masculine Norms and Violence, Making the Connections, Promundo.

20 Ibid.

21 See: Heilman, B., Barker, G., and Harrison, A. (2017), The Man Box: A Study on Being a Young Man in the US, UK, and Mexico, Washington, DC and London: Promundo-US and Unilever.

22 SEESAC, Gender and SALW in South East Europe: Main Concerns and Policy Responses.

23 See: Page, Ella, 2009, 'Men, Masculinity and Guns: Can We Break the Link?', IANSA; Mankowski, Eric, 2013, 'Antecedents to Gun Violence: Gender and Culture', In Gun violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy, American Psychological Association; Bevan, James and Nicholas Florian, 2006, 'Few options but the gun: Angry young men'. In Small Arms Survey 2006: Unfinished Business, Geneva: Small Arms Survey.

young men. Beyond demonstrating power and control, firearms can also be linked to fulfilling expectations related to gender roles and reputation in the community, or used to respond to perceived challenges to their status and “manliness”. Young offenders often regard a gun as a tool to maintain their status as “people to be feared and not challenged”. Anecdotal evidence suggests that firearms have also been part of rites of passage for young men.

Previous research²⁴ in South East Europe indicates that several factors may, to varying degrees, influence the demand for firearms among men: their perception of community safety; the perceived function of firearms, i.e. whether it serves for personal protection, hunting, or sport; social expectations of men (such as tradition, beliefs that “a man should carry a firearm”, “it inspires fear in others”, feelings of “social and economic disempowerment” and the need to “reassert power through gun use”, the urge to conform to prevailing notions of masculinity, or viewing firearms as a tool to gain power); experience with firearms; and, among socio-demographic characteristics, particularly the age of respondents.²⁵

In addition to the gender conditioning of violence, including armed violence, it is equally important not to downplay the role of the broader social context and the complex set of other factors that determine whether young men resort to violence.²⁶ Researchers highlight factors such as coercive or violent parental control, limited parental supervision, socialising with delinquent peers, having been brutalised, witnessing or experiencing violence at home or in the community, limited social skills, holding more traditional or rigid views on gender, perceiving hostile intentions in others, having used violence and observed that violence produces respect, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among others. Therefore, gender is a strong predictive factor, but it is activated only when several other social factors are present. The links between certain expectations of masculinity and firearms place certain sub-groups of men (mostly, but not exclusively, young men) at higher risk of both using guns and becoming victims of armed violence.

For the FFP, the specific factors that put (young) men at risk or encourage risk-taking behaviours should also be considered when developing both the problem profile and subject profiles.

Given these persistent risks identified among young men, the FFP should consider developing a problem profile of young men’s involvement in firearm-related criminality to provide a better understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations, and other identified high-risk issues. Such a specific problem profile can provide details on crime trends associated with young men (including hot spots) that require more detailed analysis than the tactical assessment can offer, assist in subject identification and selection (suspects or victims), support the prioritisation of specific problems that pose a risk, identify intelligence gaps, and highlight opportunities for prevention, intelligence, enforcement, and reassurance.

In addition to the problem profile, gender considerations related to young men should also inform the development of subject profiles to provide a detailed report on a suspect(s) or victim(s), assist investigations during a major or serious crime

24 SEESAC, 2006, *The Rifle has the Devil Inside – Gun Culture in South Eastern Europe*.

25 Page, Ella, 2009, ‘Men, Masculinity and Guns: Can We Break the Link?’

26 Bevan, James and Nicholas Florian, 2006, ‘Few options but the gun: Angry young men’. In *Small Arms Survey 2006: Unfinished Business*, Geneva: Small Arms Survey.

inquiry, or support research. A subject profile should further assist in prioritising subjects for investigation.

Some specific concerns and indicators of risk-taking behaviours related to young men that FFPs should take into consideration include:

- *violent acts against women and members of certain groups categorised by, for example, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, religion, etc.*
- *prior juvenile offences,*
- *gang affiliation and hooliganism,*
- *peer violence, especially bullying,*
- *violence at sports events,*
- *substance abuse, including alcohol or drugs, which may indicate possible impairment of judgement and loss of self-control,*
- *dangerous, reckless or inconsiderate driving,*
- *cybercrime,*
- *cruelty to animals, particularly inflicting suffering or harm.*

With regard to social media and online presence, special consideration should be given to any content that:

- *promotes or glorifies violence in any context,*
- *contains misogynistic attitudes, hate speech towards women and girls, or other strongly expressed prejudices against women,*
- *justifies or calls for violence against women and girls, or gender-based violence, including sexual violence, harassment, and abuse,*
- *positively references mass shootings, including posts about past mass shooting perpetrators,*
- *contains hate speech or violent attitudes towards specific groups categorised by, for example, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or religion,*
- *indicates involvement in cyberbullying, online harassment, or cybercrime,*
- *indicates gang affiliation,*
- *indicates radicalisation or violent extremism,*
- *promotes violence at sports events,*
- *promotes dangerous, reckless, or inconsiderate driving,*

- *indicates cruelty to animals.*

Such checklists are already used in the Guidelines for Gender-Responsive Firearms Licence Approval, developed by the regional working group comprising representatives of Ministries of Interior from the Western Balkans, with technical assistance from SEESAC.

These Guidelines aim to support professionals involved in firearms licence approval to integrate a gender perspective throughout the approval process, and in doing so:

- effectively prevent the misuse of firearms in domestic violence, particularly violence against women, by taking into account circumstances that may constitute risk factors;
- prevent the misuse of firearms by groups most at risk of such behaviours, particularly men aged 18–30.

In addition, the Guidelines provide a set of questions for interviews to be conducted during the background check, which aim to facilitate risk assessment. These questions are intended to further support the assessment of risk-taking behaviours.

GLOSSARY²⁷

Gender

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a particular time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female, and the relationships between women and men, and girls and boys, gender also refers to relations among women and among men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation. They are context- and time-specific, and can change. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, as are other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis, including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age, and others.

Gender norms

Gender norms are ideas about how women and men should be and behave. They are standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform, within a range defined by a particular society, culture, and community at a given time. Internalised early in life, gender norms can create a cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping.

Gender roles

Gender roles are social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. Collectively, gender roles often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to women, men, girls, and boys (see gender division of labour). Gender roles can evolve over time.

27 Definitions presented in this Glossary draw on a variety of sources, including: 1. [Gender Equality Glossary](#), UN Women Training Centre; [Gender Training Manual for the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia and the Serbian Armed Forces](#); UNDP SEESAC, [Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus](#); European Institute for Gender Equality.

Sex	Sex (biological sex) refers to the physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females. These characteristics are based on physiological factors including: sex chromosomes, reproductive organs and different role in reproduction, hormones, and secondary characteristics. Sex characteristics generally remain constant across cultures and over time.
Gender equality	Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. It means that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are considered, recognising the diversity among different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not solely a women's issue but should concern and fully involve both men and women. Equality between women and men is regarded as both a human rights issue and a precondition for, as well as an indicator of, sustainable, people-centred development.
Gender perspective	A perspective that considers gender-based differences when examining any social phenomenon, policy, or process. The term 'gender perspective' refers to an approach that analyses the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles, and interactions. This approach enables gender analysis and the subsequent mainstreaming of a gender perspective into any proposed programme, policy, or organisation.
Gender awareness	Gender awareness is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect women, men, girls and boys in a given policy area, situation or context. <i>Source: EIGE</i>
Gender statistics	Gender statistics are statistics that accurately reflect differences and inequalities between women and men in all areas of life. Gender statistics are defined by the following characteristics: (a) sex-disaggregated data —data are collected and presented disaggregated by sex as a primary and general classification; (b) data reflect gender issues; (c) data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives; and (d) data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may introduce gender biases. Examples of sex bias in data collection include underreporting of women's economic activity, undercounting of girls, their births or deaths, or underreporting of violence against women. <i>Source: EIGE</i>
Sex-disaggregated data	Sex-disaggregated data are data on individuals broken down by sex. Gender statistics rely on sex-disaggregated data and reflect the realities of women's and men's lives, as well as policy issues related to gender.

Gender mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming refers to the systematic consideration of differences between the conditions, situations, and needs of women and men in all policies and actions. Mainstreaming a gender perspective involves assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy to make both women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.
Femicide	Femicide (also known as feminicide) is the intentional, gender-motivated killing of women and girls. It refers to the killing of a woman by a man, motivated by hatred of women, contempt, pleasure, a sense of ownership, or power over women. Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence, or situations in which women have less power or fewer resources than their partners. ²⁸
Femininity	Femininity refers to different notions of what it means to be a woman, including patterns of conduct linked to a woman's assumed place within a given set of gender roles and relations.
Masculinity	Masculinity refers to different ideas about what it means to be a man, including patterns of behaviour associated with men's place in a particular set of gender roles and relations.
Gender-blind	This term refers to the failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of men and boys, and women and girls, are assigned within specific social, cultural, economic, and political contexts and backgrounds.
Gender-sensitive	Gender-sensitive refers to the characteristic of considering gender norms, roles, and relations. It indicates gender awareness, although often no corrective action is taken and it does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles, or relations.

28 World Health Organisation, 2012, [Understanding and addressing violence against women](#).

Gender-responsive Gender responsive is the approach when gender is central to achieving positive outcomes. This approach places gender at the core of programming, with the primary goal of transforming restrictive gender norms, roles, and unequal power relations. It systematically examines gender norms, roles, and relations for both women and men, including their distinct needs and the ways these dynamics shape access to and control over resources. Programming in this category typically supports initiatives to redistribute power, enhance shared decision-making, and promote equitable control of resources, while explicitly advancing women's empowerment. Interventions deliberately target and benefit specific groups of women or men (or both) to meet particular needs or achieve defined policy and programme objectives.

SEESAC's Selected Gender and SALW Control Resources

[The Misuse of Firearms in Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans: Key Trends and Main Concerns, \(2025\).](#)

[Regional Analysis on Women in SALW Control in the Western Balkans, \(2025\).](#)

[Understanding the Factors Fuelling the Demand for Firearms in the Western Balkans – Research Findings and Recommendations, \(2025\).](#)

[Guidelines for Officials of the Ministries of Interior and Police Services for Communication with the Media in Cases of Firearm Misuse in Gender-Based Violence, \(2024\).](#)

[Analysis of Media Reporting on Firearm Misuse in Male Gender-Based Violence Against Women in the Western Balkans, \(2024\).](#)

[Guidelines for Assessing and Addressing Risks Related to Firearms Misuse in Domestic Violence, \(2024\).](#)

[Guidelines for Gender-Responsive Firearms License Approval, \(2024\).](#)

[In Focus Armed Violence Monitors](#)

[Guidelines for Gender Analysis of Legislation and Policies Relevant for Small Arms Control, \(2022\).](#)

[Gender Analysis of SALW Control Legislation and Policies in the Western Balkans – reports \(2022\).](#)

[Policy brief: Small Arms Control – The Case for Gender Mainstreaming, \(2022\).](#)

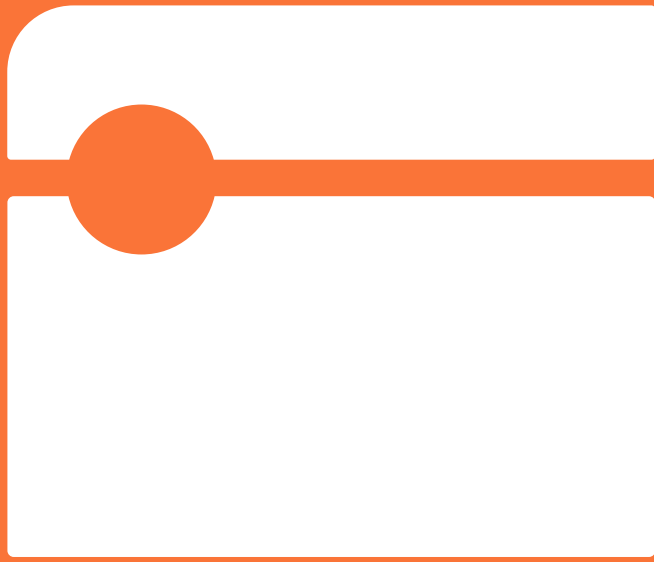
[SALW Surveys, \(2019\).](#)

[Men and Firearms in Southeast Europe, \(2019\).](#)

[Gender and Small Arms Fast Facts, \(2019\).](#)

[Gender and SALW in South East Europe. Main Concerns and Policy Response, \(2016\).](#)

[A Practical Tool for Integrating the Gender Perspective in SALW Legislative and Policy Frameworks, \(2016\).](#)



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