GENDER-RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT IN ARMED FORCES

GUIDANCE AND CASE STUDIES

Samantha Crompvoets

DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

NATO OTAN

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DCAF

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Samantha Crompvoets, PhD, is a sociologist and consultant with over 20 years' experience in the design, implementation, analysis, and reporting of strategic and applied academic research. She has conducted extensive empirical research in Australia for both the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Defence on a number of military cohorts, including reservists, women, special forces, indigenous soldiers, and veterans. In addition she has examined the intersections of lived experience and defence policies, processes, and culture across a number of corps and organizational units. Samantha has taught qualitative research methods and a range of sociology subjects at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and is a director of the research consulting firm Rapid Context.

1 Introduction

Overview

This guide aims to collate and share knowledge and experience from NATO, NATO Partners, and other armed forces regarding good practice when developing, implementing, and evaluating a gender-responsive organizational climate assessment.

The guide is structured in five parts to describe the **why** and **how** of undertaking an organizational climate assessment in armed forces. It provides step-by-step advice, along with case study examples, for progressing your climate assessment from thought to action. It also gives guidance to ensure that your climate assessment integrates a gender perspective or mainstreams gender – that is, the assessment is gender responsive.

Why is this guide required?

In 2017 DCAF, the Ministries of Defence of Georgia, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and the Government of Georgia embarked on a joint project to improve gender balance and reduce barriers to women within the Georgian Armed Forces, thereby contributing to Georgia's and NATO's strategic objectives to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security and related resolutions. This guide is developed as part of that project. The project identified that many armed forces are using, or interested in using, organizational climate assessments, but documentation of lessons learned and good practice was fragmentary and often only found in academic journals.

IMAGE: Soldiers of the Georgian Defence Forces listen to a briefing on their climate survey, 2019. © Georgian Defence Forces

This guide is a tool for building confidence and internal capability in the development and use of organizational climate assessments in armed forces. It can help armed forces to ensure that the design, implementation, and evaluation of an organizational climate assessment are underpinned by good practice: both sound academic evidence and international experience. Conducting an organizational climate assessment, as outlined in this guide, will help armed forces to gain an understanding of the current state of their organizational climate and identify areas in need of improvement. The guide pays particular attention to how climate assessments can be used as a tool to help armed forces to improve gender balance and identify problems of discrimination or harassment.

Who is this guide for?

This guide has been designed for a range of users with responsibilities for designing, implementing, and evaluating organizational climate in armed forces, with a particular focus on gender. It is a useful tool for several groups.

- Military commanders and leaders at all levels who have a role in the implementation of a gender-responsive climate assessment.
- Branches or units within armed forces and/or ministries of defence concerned with human resources and/or research. For example, an organizational development unit is generally responsible for coordinating implementation and recommendations of a climate assessment.
- Branches or units within armed forces concerned with gender mainstreaming and gender equality.

Key terminology

To ensure common understandings in using this guide, some key definitions are provided below. Definitions of gender terms are based on NATO terminology.[1]

Data processing

- Any operation performed in relation to the data (by automated, semi-automatic, or non-automatic means), in particular collection; recording; storage; alteration; use or disclosure by way of transmission, dissemination, or otherwise making the data available; grouping or combination; and deletion or destruction.

Focus group

- A data collection technique involving a group of participants brought together to discuss a particular topic.

Gender

- Gender refers to the social attributes associated with being male and female learned through socialization, and determines a person's position and value in a given context. It also means the relationships between men, women, boys, and girls, as well as the relations between women and those between men. Notably, gender does not equate to an exclusive focus on women.

Gender analysis

- Gender analysis requires the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations between men and women to identify and understand inequities based on gender. By using gender analysis, the gendered aspects of the experiences of men and women and their position within the social structure will become apparent. The analysis should be viewed as a 'method' to understand the relationships between men and women in the context of a specific society or organization. Gender analysis can be applied externally to an operational environment as well as internally in the military organization. For example, military operations' planning activities should consider the different security concerns of men, women, boys, and girls and how they are differently affected by operations and missions, but also how gender roles can affect operations and missions. Furthermore, they should take into account power relations in the community to ensure men and women have equal access to assistance where the military is engaged in supporting humanitarian assistance. Other examples include understanding how customary conflict-resolution mechanisms affect women and men differently and how their social status may change as a result of war.

Gender equality

- Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and access for men, women, boys, and girls. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's 'issue': it concerns men and men's roles as well as women and women's roles.

Gender mainstreaming

- Gender mainstreaming is a strategy used to achieve gender equality by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, in all areas and at all levels, in order to ensure that the concerns and experiences of both sexes are taken into account. It aims to ensure that the concerns and experiences of women and men are taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of legislation, policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres. This should lead to equal opportunity for women and men. Gender mainstreaming in this context is the process whereby the role gender plays in relation to [an organization's] activities, including operations, missions, and exercises, is recognized. Gender mainstreaming does not focus solely on women, but mainstreaming recognizes women's disadvantaged position in various communities.

Integration of a gender perspective

- Integrating a gender perspective is a way of assessing gender-based differences between women and men, as reflected in their social roles and interactions, in the distribution of power and access to resources. The aim is to take into consideration how a particular situation impacts on the needs of men, women, boys, and girls, and if and how [an organization's] activities affect them differently. More fundamentally, integrating a gender perspective is done by adapting action following a gender analysis.

Interview

- An interview is a verbal conversation between two people with the objective of collecting relevant information for the purpose of research. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences.

  Interviews can be structured (following a set of standardized questions), semi-structured, or unstructured. The form of an unstructured interview varies widely, with some questions prepared in advance in relation to a topic that the researcher or interviewer wishes to cover.

Quantitative data

- Data that are measured and described in terms of quantities (numbers, statistics).

Qualitative data

- Data that are measured and described in terms of qualities (language, meanings).

Survey

- A data collection technique involving a set of questions administered to a group of participants.

Stakeholder

- A stakeholder is an individual, group, or organization that has an investment in an activity, project, or programme objectives. They may also perceive themselves to be affected by a decision, outcome, or activity of a project or programme objectives. For successful engagement it is necessary to understand the nature of a partner or stakeholder's 'stake' in the outcome of the survey.

Endnotes

1. NATO ACO ACT (2017). 'Bi-Strategic Directive 40-1: Integrating UNSCR 1325 and gender perspective into the NATO command structure (public version)', 17 October, available at https://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/structure/genderadvisor/nu0761.pdf.


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2 Why Undertake a Gender-Responsive Organizational Climate Assessment?

This chapter examines the rationale for undertaking a gender-responsive organizational climate assessment. Through understanding **why** you want to do this research, you can choose the most effective methods and tools to use. The chapter explores why it is important to think about the different experiences of men and women, and how hidden issues such as sexual harassment and discrimination can often become visible through gender-responsive climate assessments.

Overview

An organizational climate assessment enhances capability through the provision of accessible, timely, and reliable strategic people research. Gathering data on experiences and attitudes helps to:

- build a picture of whether an organization has met, or is progressing towards, particular goals (for example, the increased participation and integration of women)
- identify current or emerging issues
- identify areas for improvement
- set visions for the future
- enable organizations to create a culture of continuous improvement.

IMAGE: Soldiers putting up a tent during the selection of non-commissioned officers, 2012. © Norwegian Armed Forces

Insights from data gathered and analysis conducted can be shared across the organization in a variety of ways and inform a number of activities. They can be used to:

- review or develop policies
- review or develop standard operating procedures
- review or develop organizational strategies, for example related to gender, communication, or diversity and inclusion
- develop interventions or activities aimed at improving the lived experience for members of the armed forces
- inform senior leadership or government on the current state of a particular topic, for example attitudes towards the integration of women into ground combat units.

Undertaken for the first time, a gender-responsive organizational climate assessment can build a baseline for how the organization is performing in relation to a set of themes or issues, for example:

- the treatment of women and men on the basis of their gender
- the treatment of specific minority groups
- leadership and accountability
- diversity and inclusion
- workplace behaviours.

Over time, a climate assessment that is regularly and routinely repeated builds an evidence base that can track and measure changes in and patterns of behaviour and attitudes.

An organizational climate assessment enables personnel (uniformed and civilian) to:

- share experiences and opinions about a range of work-related issues
- share their thoughts on growth and change
- give feedback on specific approaches, programmes, and services.

An organizational climate assessment enables organizations to:

- give a voice to employees/military members to express their satisfaction levels and concerns in a confidential way
- highlight those issues that employees/military members feel have an impact on their lived experience

- take the 'pulse' of the organization
- understand priorities in some key areas
- encourage the continuation of positive behaviours and strategies
- use feedback to build the foundations of the future
- make conflict within the workplace constructive instead of destructive
- enhance the quality and speed of decisions
- use an evidence base to inform the implementation of a policy
- benchmark how they are performing compared to other 'like' organizations, for example other armed forces.

Ongoing and repeated gender-responsive organizational climate assessment provides:

- deep understandings of organizational 'health', particularly in relation to the participation and integration of women
- increased organizational knowledge on culture and people research
- opportunities to explore trends and issues affecting the organization, particularly as they relate to gender, diversity, and inclusion
- opportunities to refine strategies, policies, and procedures.

The importance of gender in climate assessments

There are three fundamental reasons why defence institutions need to consider whether they have a hostile gender climate that reduces or restricts the roles of members based on gender.

- Everyone has the right to a free choice of employment, to work in an environment free from discrimination, and to have equal access to public service in their country irrespective of their gender.[1]
- Defence institutions represent the people of the nations they protect. As such they must necessarily reflect the demographics and values of the society from which they draw their members. These include, but are not limited to, gender.
- Diversity has been shown to benefit decision-making and capability in a military context.

Despite these compelling reasons, defence institutions around the world continue to be male-dominated. In all armed forces there are problems of gender-related discrimination, harassment, bullying, and abuse. While people of any gender can be the victim or the perpetrator, societal norms around gender roles and resistance to women achieving equality within armed forces mean that women are more likely to suffer discrimination or be targeted for harassment or abuse.

Experiences from many countries indicate that these problems are underreported, with few formal complaints being made. Irrespective of gender, research shows that service personnel fear that if they bring a complaint of sexual or homophobic discrimination, harassment, bullying, or abuse, they will not be believed, their complaint will not be handled confidentially or fairly, or they will face retaliation. They fear that their careers will be damaged even if their complaint is upheld, because within military culture complaining can be seen as a weakness. To support armed forces in addressing these problems within the complaints system, DCAF has published *Gender and Complaints Mechanisms: A Handbook for Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Related Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Abuse.*

Ways of collecting information about misconduct outside the complaint system, such as through climate assessments, are crucial. Moreover, climate assessments must take account of the particular concerns about confidentiality related to individuals' experiences of gender-related discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

Programmatic objectives

Programmatic objectives are a breakdown of exactly what it is that an organization hopes to accomplish through a gender-responsive climate assessment. They are a way of clearly demonstrating what those doing the assessment need to know for the assessment to be successful, and how they will use that knowledge to achieve their outcomes. As such, it is essential that objectives are formed in the early stages.

Objectives should use clear language and focus on the processes that are needed to achieve the desired outcome.

Possible programmatic objectives of a climate assessment are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Programmatic objectives for a climate assessment

Objective	Outcome
Provide substantive evidence to inform the design of effective responses and justify resource allocation	Address policy concerns – for example, recruitment and retention, integration
Educate leadership, service members, and civilian employees on the extent, severity, and consequences of a problem	Address education, training, and development needs across the organization
Identify the context, character, and causes of the problem	Inform prevention/intervention with members, leaders, and units
Provide a baseline for monitoring progress and effectiveness of specific interventions and approaches	Programme evaluation
Ensure that programmes are implemented in line with institutional, national, regional, and international laws and policies, such as those relating to gender and diversity	Change practices that may disadvantage or discriminate against particular groups, and bring them into line with norms, laws, and policies

Policy objectives

Policy objectives differ from programmatic objectives in that policies are specific mechanisms for establishing the rules and principles of an organization. A policy objective when designing and implementing a gender-responsive climate assessment could be, for instance, to increase women's participation in the defence force. Findings from the climate assessment could assist in developing the details of the policy, for example by allowing women to apply for all jobs that are open to men, and ensuring flexible employment or work conditions are available for working mothers.

Evidence-based policymaking is an important foundation in achieving synergy between organizational and employee/military member values. It enables explicit, formal, and systematic collaboration and ensures sound evidence underpins change and responses to current issues.[2]

It should be clearly stated how the gender-responsive climate assessment is envisioned to contribute to achieving specific policy objectives of the organization.

Sample research questions focused on informing policy are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample research questions focused on informing policy

Research domain	Example questions
Contextual: Identifying the form and nature of what exists	• What are the dimensions of attitudes or perceptions that are held? • What is the nature of people's experiences? • What needs do the population of the study have?
Diagnostic: Examining the reasons for, or causes of, what exists	• What factors underlie particular attitudes or perceptions? • Why are decisions or actions taken, or not taken? • Why do particular needs arise? • Why are services or programmes not being used?
Evaluative: Appraising the effectiveness of what exists	• How are objectives achieved? • What affects the successful delivery of programmes or services? • How do experiences affect subsequent behaviours? • What barriers exist to systems operating?
Strategic: Identifying new theories, policies, plans, or actions	• What types of services are required to meet needs? • What actions are needed to make programmes or services more effective? • How can systems be improved? • What strategies are required to overcome newly defined problems?

Gender-responsive considerations

- Is gender a key variable in examining policy and programme objectives?
- Are men and women participating and represented at this early discussion/development phase?
- When designing the assessment it is important to understand assumptions behind why gender has not been considered before and where barriers might exist.

Further reading

Baba, V. V. and F. Hakem Zadeh (2012). 'Towards a theory of evidence-based decision making', *Management Decision,* 50(5), 832–867.

Ritchie, J. and L. Spencer (2002). 'Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research', in A. M. Huberman and M. B. Miles (eds) *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 305–329.

Endnotes

1. See, for example, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 21 and 23.
2. Baba, V. V. and F. Hakem Zadeh (2012). 'Towards a theory of evidence-based decision making', *Management Decision,* 50(5), 832–867.

3 Preparing for a Climate Assessment

This chapter describes various issues that should be considered and actions that should be undertaken in the lead-up to a climate assessment. It covers the roles and responsibilities required for a successful climate assessment, outlining the relevant tasks and required skills, and the need for knowledge/skill-gap analysis. Further, it explains the need for institutional support, and the importance of engagement with leadership and other stakeholders as well as coordination with other parts of the organization. Finally, it highlights the need to benchmark and undertake background research, such as environmental scans.

Roles and responsibilities

Before you begin it is recommended that clear roles and responsibilities are identified and assigned to particular individuals or areas within the organization. There are a number of roles and responsibilities across the entire climate assessment cycle (the research process).

Who will do the work?

Undertaking a climate assessment requires a multidisciplinary team, which could include roles such as:

- research or project manager
- design team
- development team

IMAGE: Australian and US soldiers during a Combined Joint Live Fire Exercise on Townshend Island, 2011. Photograph by Corporal Janine Fabre, 1st Joint Public Affairs Unit

- supervisors
- fieldworkers
- data processing coordinator
- data processors
- data analyst
- data communicator.

Table 3 gives an overview of the key skills needed and tasks performed by each member of a climate assessment team. These roles are not mutually exclusive (an individual team member will probably perform more than one 'role'), nor are they exhaustive.

Table 3: Overview of roles, skills, and actions in a team conducting a climate assessment

Role	Key skills	Key actions
Research manager	Ability to oversee planning and implementation of climate assessment	• Oversees planning (schedule and logistics) and implementation • Oversees recruitment • Hires and assigns team members • Collaborates with design and development teams • Completes a quality review of outputs and pilot • Communicates with all team members on a regular basis • Translates data into findings (i.e. final report) • Submits any deliverables (i.e. draft and final report) • Is able to troubleshoot and devise back-up plan
Design team	Expertise in the interface (i.e. survey platform or tool) and user experience	• Defines and engages the organizational members (or other relevant partners or stakeholders) who need to be involved • Collaborates with the organizational members (or other relevant partners or stakeholders) to identify priorities, topics, and constructs for assessment design • Gathers background information • Reviews research, studies, and investigative reports dealing with topics and constructs for assessment • Completes internal and external benchmarking • Consults literature to inform measurement of topics and constructs, and identification of antecedents, outcomes, and correlates

Role	Key skills	Key actions
Development team	Expertise in technology, capabilities, and architecture	• Collaborates with research manager and design team • Uses appropriate technology to transform design into pilot assessment
Supervisors	Expertise in managing teams	• Coordinate daily activities of fieldworkers • Work closely with research manager
Fieldworkers	Expertise in implementing assessment	• Disseminate or conduct assessment (surveys, interviews, focus groups) • Work closely with supervisors
Data processing coordinator	Expertise in identifying and training data processors and maintaining quality control	• Identifies and trains data processing team • Maintains quality control of data • Ensures data processing is running on schedule • Creates and manages all code lists (for qualitative data) • Works closely with research manager
Data processors	Expertise in coding datasets	• Code datasets • Work closely with data processing coordinator
Data analyst	Expertise in analysing large datasets	• Analyses all data once processing is complete • Works closely with data processing coordinator, data processors, and research manager
Data communicator	Expertise in communicating findings through effective data visualization	• Works with data team and research manager to determine which elements of the findings are the most important to communicate • Tailors data visualization and summaries to specific audiences • Develops effective and visually pleasing presentations of data

What training or advice is needed?

It is important that a knowledge and/or skills-gap assessment is undertaken before roles are formally assigned to ensure that there is sufficient competence to achieve a successful research process. It is essential that all members of the team are familiar with integrating a gender perspective into research design and output. Skills to integrate a gender perspective include the abilities to ensure that language and terminology are gender neutral; to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen research methods on reaching out to each gender; to produce sex-disaggregated data; to understand how groups might use different terms to communicate the same thing (e.g. 'sexual

harassment' being a term often used for acts committed against women, while 'hazing' is used to describe the same acts committed against men); and to identify and mitigate the effects of gender bias in questions and analysis (e.g. do your questions imply assumptions about women, such as that they would want to have children?). They should also have an understanding of relevant institutional, national, regional, and international laws and policies related to gender and diversity and an understanding of common forms of gender-based discrimination that occur in the armed forces.

Institutional support

Before beginning it is important that there is institutional support to conduct the climate assessment. It is also important that you determine whose role it will be to engage with key members of the institution. You need to:

- ensure a team member is responsible for continual monitoring of institutional support and engagement with key members of the institution (including leadership and other stakeholders)
- identify key stakeholders in your organization
- engage often and early to ensure buy-in and support
- develop a multiphase communication plan (before, during, after).

Engaging leadership

Leadership affects every aspect of organizational climate. Leaders are often pointed to as one of the key instigators of a poor workplace climate, not least when it comes to gender-related issues. They are also in positions of influence and trust – they can act as barriers or facilitators of an assessment, depending on their personal position. It is therefore strongly recommended that leaders are engaged with as early as possible and, further, that their engagement is demonstrable (including their intention to act on results).

In putting together a 'business case' for undertaking a gender-responsive climate assessment, the climate assessment team could demonstrate how these assessments help leadership, especially in the achievement of international obligations and commitments (the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security; and harmonization with NATO policy on gender). In addition, the team could emphasize the opportunity to be a national or regional leader in this area.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement means that the partners and stakeholders are aware of the project and its outcomes, and are prepared to have any necessary involvement, participation, or interest in the work.

Climate assessments often require involvement from the entire organization. Stakeholders may perceive themselves to be affected by a decision, outcome, or activity of a project or programme objective. For successful engagement it is necessary to understand the nature of a partner's or stakeholder's 'stake' in the outcome of the assessment.[1]

There are five main steps to stakeholder engagement.

1. Identification of all stakeholders.

- List all interests (or 'stakes') and expectations of each stakeholder and the relative position they would take around the project. It is important to make sure that diverse groups are represented, regardless of position (for example rank) in the organization. Being diverse and inclusive is important to mitigate the risk of gender bias, for example.

2. Prioritization to determine who is important.

This can be decided through questions about four aspects.

- Power: The power an individual or group may have over the project, i.e. could they permanently change or stop the project if they are not involved?
- Proximity: The degree of involvement the person has in the work of the team.
- Urgency: The importance of the project and its outcomes, whether positive or negative, to the 'stake' of the stakeholder, and how ready they are to act to achieve these outcomes.
- Diversity: The ability of a person to represent a particular set of interests and expectations that may be distinct from those of other stakeholders.

3. Visualization to understand stakeholders' perspectives and expectations.

- Produce a map of stakeholder importance (see Figure 1).

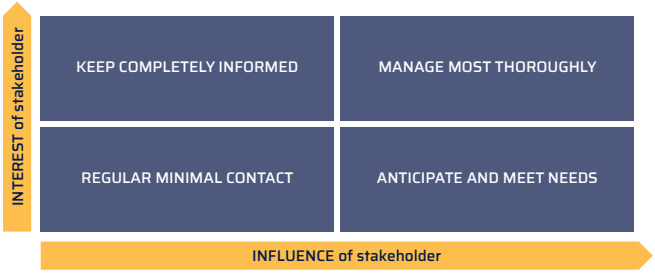
4. Engagement through effective communication.

5. Monitoring effects of the engagement.

Effective dialogue to engage stakeholders and partners will contain:

- ✓ clarification of common goals
- ✓ a clear outline of the project
- ✓ a plan for collaborative mechanisms, i.e. meeting schedules, communication plan, etc.

Figure 1: Stakeholder map. Who needs what? Who should you engage, and how often?



Ethical considerations

Consent

Informed consent forms the basis of the majority (if not all) of official ethical guidelines regarding human research. It is the foundation of international guidance such as the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki. Informed consent essentially means that individuals participating in research do so voluntarily with knowledge of the full implications of the research (regarding its impact on themselves and in terms of the research aims). It also means that participants are aware of how their information will be used (in current and future research) and under what conditions their information might be disclosed (i.e. the limits of confidentiality). Except in rare cases, consent must be given prior to an individual taking part in research.[2] Informed consent is generally gained through the signing of a form that outlines all the above considerations in clear, easily understandable language.[3] The form usually also provides information about the ethical approval process that has been undertaken and how any concerns about ethics can be lodged.

Ethical approval

In addition to consent of participants, overall ethical approval for any research is recommended. Requirements for consent and ethics are unique to each organization, and specific requirements are identified by either an ethical research board for an organization (e.g. military) or a linked academic institution (a collaborator).

In the process of gaining ethical approval, consideration will need to be given to researcher responsibilities and institutional processes in the event of disclosures or identification of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or abuse. At a minimum, support should be offered to affected personnel, and any mandatory reporting requirements fulfilled while maintaining confidentiality of the participant (see next section). DCAF's *Gender and Complaints Mechanisms: A Handbook for Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Related Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Abuse* also provides options for action.

Confidentiality

There are a number of responsibilities that the climate assessment team have regarding confidentiality of the data. You need to assure the following.

- Ensure that survey respondents and focus group participants are clear on whether their answers are confidential (not released at all), anonymous (can be quoted but without them being named), or public. This should be part of obtaining informed consent.
- Ensure that senior staff understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality, even for serious breaches of the law or institutional policies, and that disciplinary measures are spelled out for breaches of confidentiality and retaliation. For example, in an instance where a participant discloses an event such as discrimination, harassment, bullying, or abuse, staff are still bound by confidentiality.
- Highlight at the outset that breaches of law or institutional policies which are reported through the survey or focus groups will not result in any follow-up response. Ensure that information is simultaneously provided on the different options available to respondents should they wish to make a complaint.
- Ensure that datasets are kept confidentially and cannot be accessed by anyone who has authority over the respondents.

- Ensure that the statistics which are reported to management and/or the general public do not risk breaching the confidentiality of respondents. For example, if statistics provided in the final report are disaggregated by age, gender, rank, and unit, it may be possible to deduce what individual respondents have reported.

Confidentiality is often confused with 'anonymity'. Confidentiality is a generic term that means all the data and information are kept hidden from everyone except the primary research team. Anonymity is when a person will never be traceable to any data presented about them, and can be on a continuum from completely anonymous to very nearly identifiable. In reality, true anonymity is nearly always impossible to guarantee.

Risk assessment

Before beginning your gender-responsive climate assessment it is important to do a risk assessment. This means asking questions about what could go wrong and what is unpredictable. Once risks have been identified it is then necessary to describe how they will be addressed or mitigated.

Possible risks and strategies to address them are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Examples of risks and mitigating strategies

Identified risk	Risk mitigation
There is no support from leadership	Communicate early and often about the objective of doing the research
We do not have the right skills to undertake the climate assessment	Do the knowledge/skill-gap assessment and train, hire, or mentor as needed
Low uptake of survey (risking ability to generalize results) or uptake from a non-representative portion of the population	Develop marketing and communication materials to make sure everyone knows why it is important to be involved
The climate assessment is seen as creating problems that were not thought to have existed previously	Communicate early that uncovering a previously unreported problem is an opportunity to improve the institutional climate
Superiors resort to retaliation against respondents whom they suspect of identifying problems	Ensure respondent confidentiality and implement a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation
Respondents do not trust the process and fail to disclose issues, thus undermining the impetus for institutional change	Communicate from the outset that an overly positive reaction may be indicative of a lack of trust; implement confidence-building measures in the methodology

Background research

This section provides a guide to exploring key themes on which your gender-responsive climate assessment can focus. Determining what to focus on can depend on things such as organizational priorities, or wanting to know how you compare to other armed forces or other organizations in your own country.

Conducting an environmental scan

One way to begin refining the scope of your study is an examination of 'what else exists' on the topic or group on which you want to focus. This can involve a review of relevant internal and external reports and academic literature: an environmental scan (see Figures 2 and 3).

Central to designing a gender-responsive climate assessment is an examination of gender-related provisions in different policies and commitments, for example:

- national gender equality, anti-discrimination, and labour laws
- national and institutional policies on gender equality, diversity, and the work environment, including national action plans on women, peace, and security
- international and regional commitments such as conventions, strategies, and International Labour Organization standards.

Figure 2: Environmental scan – External information

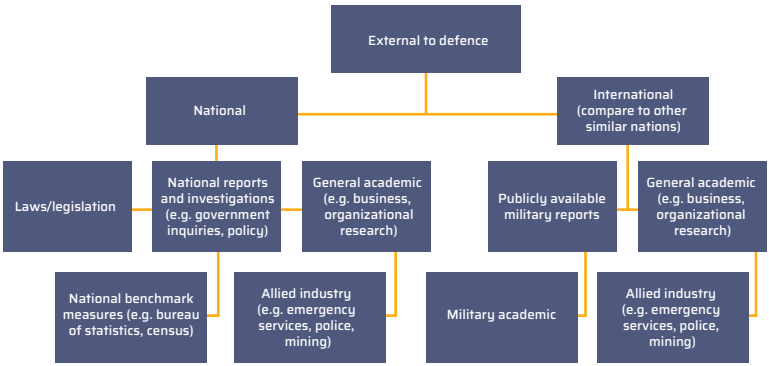
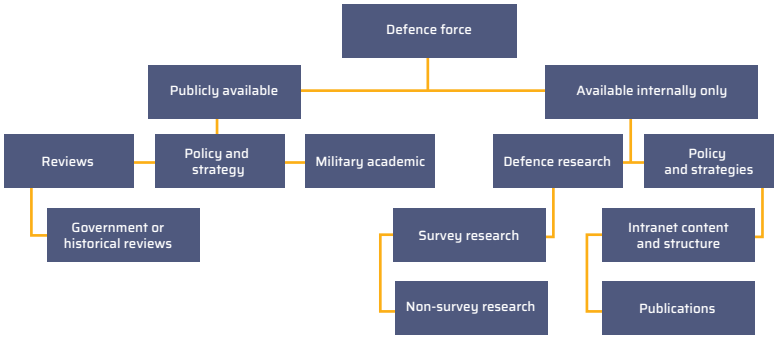


Figure 3: Environmental scan – Internal information



Gender-responsive considerations

When putting together a team, consideration should be given to the importance of diversity. When looking at gender climate it is particularly important that all genders are well represented in the team (in terms of both numbers and seniority). Consideration should be given to the role of fieldworkers in particular. For example, if sensitive in-depth interviews are being done with women in the workplace, it is desirable that a female fieldworker conducts those interviews for the comfort of those participating. Similarly, if focus groups will form a part of the assessment, you may need facilitators with attributes appropriate to the make-up of the groups (consider gender, age, seniority, language, etc.).

Further reading

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Bourne, L. (2016). 'Targeted communication: The key to effective stakeholder engagement', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 226, 431–438.

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1. Andriof, J., S. Waddock, B. Husted, and S. S. Rahman (2017). *Unfolding Stakeholder Thinking: Theory, Responsibility and Engagement.* London: Routledge; Bourne, L. (2016). 'Targeted communication: The key to effective stakeholder engagement', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 226, 431–438.
2. Exceptions are sometimes made on the basis of there being no foreseeable harm, but such a decision is usually taken by an ethics board. Exceptions are also made in some military circumstances, such as in the United States where the Secretary of Defense can waive advanced informed consent under certain conditions.
3. Instructions on designing such a form can be found on Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council website: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/ethical-issues-and-resources.


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4 Developing and Implementing a Gender-Responsive Climate Assessment

This chapter suggests six stages in the climate assessment process: designing and developing the climate assessment; recruitment; processing and analysing; communicating and reporting; planning action; and evaluating. The guidance provided for each stage is not exhaustive, but is intended to move you through a number of key considerations.

In Chapter 5 you will find a climate assessment checklist that summarizes the steps outlined in Chapters 3 and 4.

One: Design and develop

Choosing a research approach

Research methods are split broadly into quantitative and qualitative methods (see Table 5). Which you choose will depend on:

- your research questions
- your underlying philosophy of research
- your preference and skills.

Issues that must be considered when selecting a method of assessment are:

- assessment/research questions
- use of the results
- target population
- constraints on resources and logistics
- stakeholders' perspectives.

IMAGE: A U.S. Air Force officer attaches night vision goggles to her headset in preparation for an upcoming airlift mission, 2013 © U.S. Air Force, photo by Senior Master Sgt. Denise Johnson

Table 5: Summary of qualitative and quantitative research

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Purpose	• Generates theory from observations • Oriented to discovery, exploration • Emphasizes meanings, interpretations	• Tests theory through observations • Oriented to cause and effect • Emphasizes things that can be measured
Emphasis	Context: specific depth and detail	Generalization and replication
Sources of data	• Interviews (structured, semi-structured, or unstructured) • Focus groups • Questionnaires or surveys • Secondary data, including diaries, self-reporting, written accounts of past events/archive data, and company reports • Direct observations – may also be recorded (video/audio) • Ethnography	• Surveys where there are a large number of respondents • Observations (counts of numbers and/or coding data into numbers) • Secondary data (government data, etc.) • Analysis techniques include hypothesis testing, correlations, and cluster analysis
Researcher concerns	• Have I coded my data correctly? • Have I managed to capture the situation in a realistic manner? • Have I described the context in sufficient detail? • Have I managed to see the world through the eyes of my participants? • Is my approach flexible and able to change?	• Reliability and validity of questions
Benefits	• Detailed understanding of issues	• Generalizable understanding of issues beyond the research setting
Limitations	• It can be subjective • It cannot always be replicated • It cannot always be generalizable • It cannot always give definite answers in the way that quantitative research can • It can be easier to carry out (or hide) poor-quality qualitative research than bad quantitative research	• Does not show trends or change if it is a standalone survey at one point in time • May not provide the 'right' answers if the 'right' questions are not asked • Lack of flexibility • Response categories often predetermined

Mixed-methods approach

There are advantages and disadvantages to both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and it is often a **combination of the two** that creates the best research outcome as you can maximize the impact of both.

Qualitative data can be used to help validate or explain findings obtained from quantitative data. For example, an interview participant might be presented with the latest climate assessment findings and disagree with ratings of effective leadership. The interview might then explore with the participant what they think effective leadership is and how they may come to rate it in the survey. Over several interviews, a pattern of behaviour or thinking which supports or refutes a survey finding may emerge.

Conversely, findings from qualitative data can be tested via or used to shape quantitative survey methods. In the example above, the interview might reveal varying definitions of effective leadership, which can then be incorporated into survey design (such as narrowing the term, providing definitions, or assessing various types of leadership as effective).

Advantages of combining quantitative and qualitative results

- Clarifying and answering more questions from different perspectives.
- Enhancing the validity of your findings.
- Increasing the capacity to cross-check one dataset against another.
- Providing the detail of individual experiences behind the statistics.
- Helping in the development of particular measures.
- Tracking stages over time.

Considerations

- For mixed methods to be successful, issues of sampling, design, data analysis, and data presentation need careful attention.
- Two ways of mixing methods regarding design are *concurrent and sequential*, but other new mixes are emerging.

Choosing a method of data collection

The three main methods of data collection in gender-responsive climate assessments are surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Surveys

Standardized surveys or questionnaires for climate assessments are commercially available[1] and examples can be found online. Chapter 6 presents examples of survey designs from two armed forces for users to consider when thinking about their own survey design.

Using an existing standardized survey may provide an opportunity to benchmark your organization against others. In contrast, customizing or developing your own gender-responsive climate assessment survey allows you to focus on areas of most relevance, address context-specific issues, and control how gender dimensions are integrated into the questions. Nonetheless, inclusion of some standard measures and constructs is recommended (such as measures of morale, work health and safety, work demands, leadership, etc.).[2]

Interviews

Interviews facilitate the gathering of everyday experiences related to the issue in focus. An unstructured or non-directive interview is one in which questions are not prearranged. These non-directive interviews are considered to be the opposite of a structured interview, which asks a set of standardized questions. Interviews can be done face to face or over the phone or by video call.

Focus groups

Focus groups allow the gathering of many opinions relatively quickly. From a climate assessment perspective, they can provide insights into patterns of thinking about issues for different collectives of people (e.g. men or women, or those in training compared to those with longer service).

Extreme caution needs to be exercised in focus groups so that discussion is not dominated by a few people and those who have different views are heard. There is a risk that those with different views will be silenced, masking the scope of a problem or ways it impacts people.

Focus groups require three key elements.

- Appropriate participants. In the military, mixed-rank groups may affect the group dynamics, as participants defer to senior officers. Mixed-gender groups may also elicit different responses than single-sex groups.
- An experienced facilitator to manage the group dynamics and ensure all voices have an opportunity to be heard.

- Data analysis by researchers with the right skills, to examine what is said and not said in the group environment.

Table 6 summarizes different methods of data collection.

Table 6: Summary of data collection methods[3]

Method	Objective	Benefits	Difficulties	Techniques	Variables
Survey (quantitative)	To understand how often or to what extent To generalize to the whole population	Efficient and economical Anonymity and confidentiality	Non-response bias Response bias	Mailed questionnaire Online questionnaire Telephone questionnaire Face-to-face questionnaire	Numerical values Ordinal/ categorical values Scales Open ended Demographics Dichotomous
Interview (qualitative)	To get an in-depth understanding of how and/or why	Obtain rich, in-depth data	Inefficient use of time and resources Interviewer effects Generalizability	In person Over the phone	Formal Structured Informal
Focus group (qualitative)	To gather a wide range of responses	Diverse views on a topic	Facilitation quality Sensitivity of the topic Validity and generalizability	Facilitated group interview with individuals who have something in common Gathers information about combined perspectives and opinions Responses are often coded into categories and analysed thematically	Divided by gender Divided by rank

Questionnaires can be completed by respondents themselves ('self-enumerated') or asked by an interviewer. Table 7 sets out the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Table 7: Advantages and disadvantages of self-enumeration and interviewer-assisted approaches

Data collection method	Mode of data collection	Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-enumeration	• Paper-and-pencil interviewing (PAPI) • Computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI)	• Relatively easy to administer • Usually cheaper • Useful for surveys that require detailed information • Useful for sensitive issues because the questionnaire can be completed in private	• Requires either knowledgeable or well-educated respondents or a very straightforward survey topic • Response rates are usually lower
Interviewer assisted		• Higher response rate and overall quality of the data • Personalizing the interview • Being able to interpret questions and survey concepts • Stimulating interest in the survey • Can reassure about confidentiality • More flexible on collection periods	• Expensive and difficult to manage • Poorly trained interviewers can cause response errors • For sensitive topics respondents may be reluctant to answer questions

Regardless of approach or data collection method chosen, a number of things must be considered prior to conducting the climate assessment. *Testing* or *piloting* the chosen methods allows for adjustments and modification before wide-scale implementation. Piloting can be done with a small sample.

Two: Recruitment and sampling

There are a number of stages in working out who the target population of the climate assessment is and then how to recruit that sample. A typical process for sampling and recruitment for the assessment looks like the following example.

1. Define target population (e.g. regular forces, primary reserve).
2. Develop sampling frame (e.g. through a human resources management system).
3. Specify the sampling unit: divide the population into subsets using stratified sampling (e.g. by sex, by rank group).
4. Draw a random sample from each subset to represent the views of all the members within the subsets.
5. Specify the sampling plan (e.g. how and when sample should be engaged in participation).
6. Verify and execute the survey.

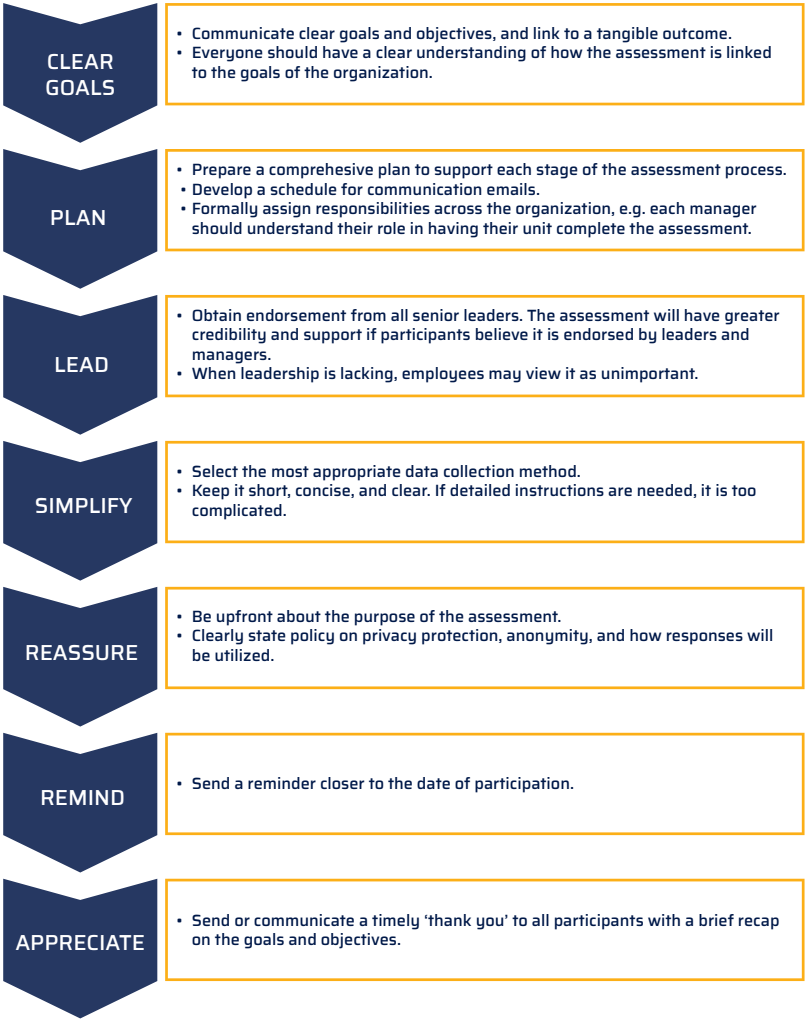
The main factors influencing participation in climate assessments are:

- concerns over privacy and security of data
- the perception of individuals that their information will be identified and the content or substance of their response will not be protected, which will affect their professional reputation and career.[4]

Figure 4 sets out strategies for increasing participation in an assessment. Further considerations for fieldwork or data collection include the following.

- Timing: the burden upon participants as individuals and the organization as a whole.
    - Is it near the annual (or regular) reporting period? Is it a period of high operational tempo?
    - When are people who you want to engage with available (avoid typical holiday periods)?
- Other research: are people being recruited into studies for multiple projects?
    - Try to coordinate with other surveys planned, so you are not overlapping or you do not sample the same people.

Figure 4: Strategies for increasing participation in an assessment



Three: Processing and analysis

Data should be processed in accordance with the following principles:

- fairness and lawfulness
- existence of explicitly specified legitimate purpose
- proportionality and adequacy
- validity and accuracy of data
- storage of data only for the period necessary to achieve the goal.

Data analysis incorporates several technical elements. It is fundamentally about data reduction: synthesizing the large body of knowledge so it can be interpreted.

Qualitative data

Transcription

Where possible, interviews should be recorded and transcribed for analysis. This task can often be outsourced to a professional transcription company, with appropriate consideration given to speed/accuracy and security.

Coding

The 'coding' of qualitative data is a process of sorting and categorizing. Codes serve as a way to label, compile, and categorize your data. Coding can be done manually, for example by going through the transcript and writing or typing key themes next to each sentence or paragraph, or using a qualitative software program.

The transcribed data can be coded for relevant categories as well as other themes that emerge. Coding can be either structured or iterative.

- Structured: the data are coded against predetermined themes or categories that are of interest to the research team (e.g. demographics, known issues).
- Iterative: the data are coded against themes that emerge during the process, with no preconceived ideas about what is going to be discovered.

In practice, coding is usually a combination of both approaches. Structured coding is faster, but iterative coding provides opportunities for unknown/unexpected insights to emerge. Iterative coding is especially useful for climate assessments, because researcher assumptions may be challenged by the

observed data. Iterative coding takes time, because as new codes emerge, previously coded data may need to be recoded.

Understanding what each code means and encompasses is important, especially if multiple researchers are coding the data. Inter-coder reliability is enhanced when those doing the coding have an opportunity to code the same pieces of data (e.g. transcripts of between five and ten interviews) and discuss with each other why they chose to apply certain codes.

Importantly, you can code not only for what is obvious in the data, but also for *what is not obvious or missing* (e.g. assumptions, omissions).

Analysis

The aim of analysis is to take account of all the coded information, as well as any other available information, to make sense of the data. The analytic process is quite iterative and may require working and reworking to uncover and explain the variety of ways influencing factors (such as gender) are working in or impacting upon the organizational climate. Exploring and testing assumptions are key to reliable analysis.

The 'doing' of analysis can seem mysterious, but it is about identifying patterns (including patterns of omission) and associations (not causations) between relevant factors. Importantly, such associations may not be linear but can flow through one or more additional factors.

Tabulating the frequency with which coded values occur across the data (as well as cross-tabulations with demographics or other coded values) can be a starting point for qualitative analysis. Such information is only indicative, however, so it is inappropriate to include it in the final report without further analysis. Furthermore, the most commonly occurring coded values may not actually be the most influential: volume does not always equal importance in qualitative work. Sometimes the coded value that occurs the least (or not at all) may provide a highly meaningful insight.

Analysis may expose or even challenge deeply held underlying assumptions about the organization. This can be difficult for researchers, or those invested in a particular world-view of the problem and its impact. Ensuring that such challenging insights are given due consideration (perhaps via secondary analysis) enhances the rigour of the qualitative work.

Quantitative survey data

Data cleaning

Prior to commencing analysis it is essential the datasets are free from errors or flaws, such as missing or incomplete data. A process for addressing such gaps (data cleaning) is required. Some options include the following.

- Acknowledge gaps and use what is provided (e.g. '90 per cent of respondents answered this question').
- Exclude cases where there are gaps from the analysis (e.g. '75 per cent of respondents answered all questions, and only these responses are included').
- Imputation, which means generating estimated data based on known responses to fill any gaps (an advanced technique used with very large datasets).

Analysis

Before carrying out data analysis it is good practice to examine the data you have collected. Examples of ways to do this are listed below.

- Review the research questions, the survey purpose, and key outcomes required from the survey.
- Consider the response rate. Was it as expected? Was this consistent across groups/ questions? Were there any questions or groups with a particularly low response rate?
- Produce a descriptive overview of the whole survey results – for example by looking at the percentage distributions among key demographic variables focused on gender and also age, rank, and branch/trade group. This will start to highlight the key findings from the survey.
- Look for any potential data errors/anomalies.
- Once you have an idea of the key survey findings, exploratory/hypothesis testing analysis can be carried out to answer specific questions.

Analysing quantitative data requires the application of statistical methods appropriate to the data and the research questions.

- Descriptive statistics (e.g. frequency analysis, cross-tabulation, mean/ median) allow an understanding of the patterns of responses, but do not provide insight into relationships between data points or trends over time.

- Inferential statistical analysis (e.g. chi squares, t-tests) allows a more sophisticated understanding of the data, and assessment of whether any patterns in the results are likely due to chance or really exist.

Weighting and estimation should be considered.

- Determine whether you have surveyed all of the population (that is, conducted a census) or a sample of the population.
- Design weight calculations based on the target sample.
- Determine non-response adjustment factors and produce a non-response adjusted weight.
- Consider point estimates (trends over time).
- Consider variance estimates.

Four: Communicate and report

Communication plan

A multiphase communication plan needs to be developed to share results with all members of the organization and stakeholders. It should summarize the findings and describe the next steps and the way forward. This may also be a space to offer resources to organization members if applicable.

It is important to acknowledge that there is a broad range of digital users, and a range of different communication approaches should be considered:

- email
- intranet
- organization's newsletter or magazine
- social media.

Reporting of results

Statistical results can be reported in several ways.

- A *technical report* may be produced as the first step to understating the quantitative data results (e.g. results by questions, statistical analyses applied). This is not recommended as a final product: interpretation of the results (what they mean) needs to be done in simple, non-technical language so that key findings and insights are highlighted for the main audience.

- Avoid reporting trends in data (increases, decreases, differences) that are not supported by statistically significant results. To do so is misleading, giving the impression there is change (e.g. as a result of intervention) that is not the result of chance.
- Where results with significance occur (using a 95 per cent or 99 per cent confidence interval), these should be drawn out and explained.

Challenges and limitations

Anonymity

An idealized view of anonymity is that a person will never be traceable from the data presented about them. This is often confused with 'confidentiality', which is a generic term that refers to all of the data and information that is kept hidden from everyone except the primary research team. Anonymity is a continuum from completely anonymous to very nearly identifiable. It can be very difficult for researchers to balance the two competing priorities of preserving the richness of the material while also maximizing the protection of the participants.[5] This is an issue that often occurs during defence-based research when focusing on female participants of a specific rank, as numbers can be quite low and therefore participants are much more easily identified.

Indefinite retention of data

Avoid indefinite retention of data. Some privacy law requires an agency or organization that has collected personal information to destroy, delete, or de-identify that information after a set period of time or in certain circumstances. This requirement may arise where, for example, an organization has collected personal information for the specific purpose of identifying an individual. When the identification process has been completed, the organization may no longer have a lawful reason to hold the personal information. Accordingly, destruction or de-identification of the information may be the most effective means of ensuring that the individual's information is not subsequently misused or disclosed without authorization.[6]

Five: Plan action

Translating your findings into action is one of the most important steps in conducting a climate assessment. At this stage you need to revisit your

programmatic objectives and examine how you can use your findings to inform or develop your focus area. For example:

- addressing policy concerns – representation, recruitment, and retention
- addressing education, training, and development needs across the force
- informing prevention/intervention with members, leaders, and units
- evaluating programmes
- adapting practices that may disadvantage or discriminate against particular groups and bringing them into line with norms, laws, and policies.

At this stage you may need to develop a specific project plan against your objective or objectives in order to map out the steps to translate it into action.

Six: Evaluate

It is important to evaluate the successes and failures of your climate assessment, and record 'lessons learned'. This stage is critical to ensuring the success of subsequent climate assessments.

Evaluation can be done formally, for example through follow-up interviews with participants and stakeholders, or informally, for example in a workshop with the climate assessment team.

Questions to ask when evaluating could include the following.

- How easy or difficult was it for participants to answer the survey questions?
- Was enough time given for design/recruitment/implementation/analysis?
- Did we have the right skills to do the job?
- Did we have the right resources?
- Did we communicate the intent/findings effectively?

This chapter outlined six stages in the climate assessment process: designing and developing the climate assessment; testing and implementing; processing and analysing; communicating and reporting; planning action; and evaluating. Table 8 summarizes these six stages, and the skills and knowledge required in each. Chapter 5 contains a climate assessment checklist which can act as a reference in working through these six stages.

Table 8: Key components of the climate assessment process and skills required

				To be completed by project leader	
Component of research process	**Key output**	**Questions to ask**	**Skill/ knowledge required**	**Importance** *High* *Moderate* *Low*	**Response options** *Training* *Mentoring* *Hiring*
Design	Topic definition	Can we engage with organizational members and key stakeholders in a productive manner?	Effective communication		
Develop	Pilot survey	Do we have an understanding of the ethical/legal responsibilities in conducting research? Do we have the skills and resources to develop and complete a pilot survey?	Legislation Research management Expertise in technology, capabilities, and architecture		
Implement	Completed surveys	Do we know how to coordinate the daily activities to ensure we run on schedule?	Effective coordination and management skills		
Process and analyse	Processed data	Can we ensure that the data are clean and entered correctly? Do we have enough skills to analyse the datasets effectively and efficiently?			

				To be completed by project leader	
Component of research process	**Key output**	**Questions to ask**	**Skill/ knowledge required**	**Importance** *High* *Moderate* *Low*	**Response options** *Training* *Mentoring* *Hiring*
Communicate and report	Findings	Expertise in data processing and maintaining quality control in data processing Expertise in analysis software			
Plan action	Next steps				
Evaluate	Continuous monitoring				

Gender-responsive considerations

- Understand that minority groups might feel they are identifiable even when data collection is 'anonymous'. For example, asking for gender as a key demographic question as well as rank might mean that a woman is identifiable if she is the only one at that rank level or at a particular location.
- Consider the gender of an interviewer and how this might affect responses. For example, a female interviewer might work best for female interview participants. Similarly, it may be better to have a woman facilitate a female-only or mixed-gender focus group.

Further reading

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Survey template examples: https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-templates/?ut_source=header.

Conducting an interview: https://www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/conducting-an-interview.php.

Strategies for qualitative interviews: https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/interview_strategies.pdf.

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Endnotes

1. See, for example, the Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Sciences, available at www.midss.org/.
2. This 'What is a survey' booklet is written for non-specialists and can assist in developing an understanding of the elements of the research process. It is available at https://www.unh.edu/institutional-research/sites/default/files/pamphlet.pdf.
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5 Climate Assessment Checklist

1. Preparing for the climate assessment

This phase focuses on collaborating with organizational members (and any other stakeholders) and gathering background information. Key actions are as follows.

- ☐ Define and engage the organizational members (or any other relevant stakeholders) who need to be involved in the process.
- ☐ Collaborate with organizational members to identify topics and constructs for assessment.
- ☐ Review research, studies, and investigative reports dealing with topics and constructs for assessment.
- ☐ Consult literature to inform measurement of topics and constructs and identification of antecedents, outcomes, and correlates.
- ☐ Conduct a skills and knowledge-gap analysis and take remedial actions.
- ☐ Assign all roles.
- ☐ Define the research focus or research questions.
- ☐ Decide on policy or programme objectives.
- ☐ Decide on your target population.
- ☐ Draft a communication strategy.
- ☐ Confirm institutional support and resources.
- ☐ Draft a comprehensive project plan outlining timeframes, risks, and key milestones.

IMAGE: Soldiers of the Georgian Defence Forces complete a climate survey, 2019. © Georgian Defence Forces

2. Designing and developing the climate assessment

This phase focuses on taking the information from the collaboration and background and creating the survey.

- ☐ Define the method(s), i.e. quantitative, mixed method, etc.
- ☐ Draft specific climate assessment questions for the chosen method(s).
- ☐ Refine and confirm target population and sample.
- ☐ Implement communication and marketing strategies.
- ☐ Submit survey for ethical approval with relevant organizational body.
- ☐ Pilot the survey or interview and focus group questions.

3. Implementation of climate assessment

- ☐ Confirm who will coordinate survey responses ready for analysis.
- ☐ Ensure there is a point of contact available to answer any questions from participants who are completing the survey.
- ☐ Make sure secondary recruitment strategies are ready if you are getting poor participation rates.
- ☐ Make sure appropriate and secure systems are set up to receive returned surveys.

4. Processing and analysis

- ☐ Ensure the team has the appropriate analysis software to do their job.
- ☐ Coordinate and manage the different datasets.

5. Communication and reporting

- ☐ Implement communication plan.

6. Evaluate

- ☐ Create an effective feedback loop to gather information on what worked and what did not.

6 Examples of survey approaches in armed forces

This chapter presents three examples of tools for gender-sensitive climate assessments from the armed forces of Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom for users to consider when designing their own assessments. These approaches have assisted these armed forces to determine whether they have the right resources, policies, services, and programmes in place regarding equality and diversity, harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct.

IMAGE: Graduating recruits of the British Royal Air Force, 2014. © Crown Copyright, Photographer Kate Rutherford

Canadian Armed Forces

Title	Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces (SSMCAF)
Purpose	The SSMCAF aims to collect up-to-date data on behaviours and attitudes concerning harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour within the Canadian Armed Forces for analysis, and to measure the impact of Operation HONOUR.
Policy or programmatic objective	The SSMCAF is part of the Operation HONOUR initiative to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour within the Canadian Armed Forces.
How often is it conducted?	Every two years.
Data collection method	Online survey.
Sample	The SSMCAF is a census of all Regular Force and Primary Reserve Force personnel.
Areas covered	Three forms of inappropriate sexual behaviour: sexual assault (experienced), sexualized behaviour (witnessed or experienced), and discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity (witnessed or experienced). Knowledge of directives, policies, and programmes related to sexual misconduct. Perceptions of Canadian Armed Forces' responses to sexual misconduct.
Gender sensitivity	Females, visible minorities, Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities are compared with the other personnel.
Communication of findings and outcomes	Statistics Canada and the Department of National Defence jointly release the SSMCAF results to the public at a news conference, and the Canadian Armed Forces address the findings during this conference.
Further information	https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/conflict-misconduct/operation-honour.html https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/161128/dq161128a-eng.pdf

Spanish Armed Forces

Title	Defence Personnel Information System (SIPERDEF in Spanish)
Purpose	SIPERDEF is a sex-disaggregated database for all civilian and military personnel working for the Spanish Ministry of Defence and the Spanish Armed Forces. It includes complete information on career development, education and training, assignments, evaluation for promotion, economical information, work–life balance, and leave records. The SIPERDEF database includes a real-time query report system which allows management at different levels to design different ad hoc reports. These reports can be used as indicators of how different personnel policies are implemented and accepted by different target groups, including men and women in every situation, post, unit, or branch.
Policy or programmatic objective	• SIPERDEF is continuously updated on a real-time basis with information from every unit at company/battalion level. • Different policies implemented are checked on a monthly/quarterly basis, with specific indicators which are designed by management. • Sex-disaggregated data are easy to manage, as every personnel file indicates the sex of the individual.
How often is it conducted?	Reports are generated as required, normally on a monthly basis.
Data collection method	Personal information is updated daily by unit personnel offices in every military and civilian unit.
Sample	• The sample is the whole population. The system manages information concerning about 140,000 people. • Samples can be stratified by service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Common Corps), by rank, or by unit, according to management needs. • The users of a specific work–life balance policy can be chosen as well, which allows policymakers to evaluate the impact of these policies.
Areas covered	• Work–life balance policies, including maternity leave, paternity leave, breastfeeding, leaves to care for dependants, and single-parent families. • Pay and allowances. • Deployment. • Training. • Development and career. • Future plans. • Health, fitness, and welfare. • Family life and being part of society.
Gender sensitivity	Personnel authorities at the Ministry of Defence level and services (Army, Navy, Air Force) level use this system to create and update gender policies.

Communication of findings and outcomes	Reports are summarized on an annual basis and sent to Branch Personnel Commands from the Ministry of Defence.
Further information	Many of the reports are posted on the Ministry of Defence Equality website on a monthly basis.

United Kingdom Ministry of Defence

Title	Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS)
Purpose	It is important for the Ministry of Defence and individual services to understand the opinions and attitudes of service personnel. AFCAS is one of the main ways to gather information on the views and experiences of regular service personnel. The information from this survey helps shape policies for training, support, and terms and conditions of service. AFCAS aims to be a flexible strategic and operational tool that changes shape and content depending on requirements, while tracking long- and medium-term measures for trend analysis.
Policy or programmatic objective	▪ AFCAS is intended to be a through-life tool including core items to track key variables and identify trends over time. ▪ The inclusion of a limited-term items list supports specific policy developments. ▪ Linked to key personnel strategies and initiatives/ programmes.
How often is it conducted?	Annually.
Data collection method	AFCAS is currently distributed bi-modally. Sampled personnel are sent a personalized email which contains their unique web link and invites them to complete the survey online. Paper questionnaires are also sent out to personnel in the sample to help maximize participation and response rates.
Sample	A disproportionate stratified random sample of approximately 29,000 trained regular service personnel is selected for the AFCAS. The sample is stratified by service (Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, and Royal Air Force) and rank. Different ranks are known to produce different response rates, so the stratification helps to ensure sufficient representativeness across the groups.

Areas covered	• Morale. • Commitment and engagement. • Work and line management. • Leadership and managing change. • Working with others. • Pay and allowances. • Deployment. • Training. • Development and career. • Future plans. • Work–life balance; fairness at work. • Health, fitness, and welfare. • Accommodation and catering. • Family life and being part of society.
Gender sensitivity	Differences in the attitudes of males and females can be assessed.
Communication of findings and outcomes	Findings are published on the government website (gov.uk) each year as a national statistic. A main report is published alongside reference tables. Internal to the Ministry of Defence, a Defence Briefing Note is published and each service reports on its service-specific findings.
Further information	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index

7 Additional Resources

Handbooks and guides on research

Andriof, J., S. Waddock, B. Husted, and S. S. Rahman (2017). *Unfolding Stakeholder Thinking: Theory, Responsibility and Engagement.* London: Routledge.

Baba, V. V. and F. Hakem Zadeh (2012). 'Towards a theory of evidence-based decision making', *Management Decision,* 50(5), 832–867.

Bourne, L. (2016). 'Targeted communication: The key to effective stakeholder engagement', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 226, 431–438.

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Mack, N., C. Woodsong, C. MacQueen, G. Guest, and E. Namey (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide.* Durham, NC: Family Health International.

IMAGE: Riot platoon commander of the Irish Defence Forces, 2007. © Óglaigh na hÉireann, Irish Defence Forces, Defence Forces Public Relations Section

McNamara, C. (2010). 'General guidelines for conducting interviews', 'Basics of conducting focus groups', and 'Basics of developing a case study', available at www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/casestdy.htm.

Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Sciences, available at www.midss.org/.

Nardi, P. M. (2018). *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods,* 4th edn. London: Routledge.

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Scottish Government Social Research Group. 'Guide 7: Cognitive testing in survey questionnaire design', Social Science Methods Series, available at https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/175356/0091403.pdf.

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Taylor-Powell, E. and C. Hermann (2000). 'Collecting evaluation data: Surveys', UW Extension, available at http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-10.PDF.

Tourangeau, R. (2018) 'Maintaining respondent trust and protecting their data', in D. Vannette and J. Krosnick (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Survey Research.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2009–2014) 'Making data meaningful', Parts 1–4, United Nations, available at https://www.unece.org/stats/documents/writing/.

University of Minnesota (2018). 'Data collection techniques', available at https://cyfar.org/data-collection-techniques.

Wildemuth, B. M. (2017). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science,* 2nd edn. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Examples of climate assessment surveys and related materials

Australia

Australian Human Rights Commission: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment.

2018 'Survey report – Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces', available at https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/AHRC_WORKPLACE_SH_2018.pdf.

Media release: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/media-releases/fourth-national-survey-workplace-sexual-harassment.

NSW Government: 'People Matter' survey.

2018 Main findings report and an overview of how the results will be used: https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/reports---data/state-of-the-sector/people-matter-employee-survey/people-matter-employee-survey-2018/people-matter-employee-survey-2018.

Canada

Canadian health and mental health surveys.

Pearson, C., M. Zamorski, and T. Janz (2014). 'Mental health of the Canadian Armed Forces', available at www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2014001/article/14121-eng.pdf.

Ireland

Irish Defence Forces climate assessments.

Republic of Ireland Department of Defence (2015). 'Wellbeing in the Defence Forces, report on the Defence Forces "Your Say" climate survey', available at https://www.defence.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2017-12/df-climate-survey-report-2016.pdf.

MacMahon, J., S. Mac Curtain, and C. Harnett (2017). 'Workplace Climate in the Defence Forces Phase 2: Results of the focus group', University of Limerick, available at https://www.defence.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2017-12/workplace-climate-defence-forces.pdf.

United Kingdom

UK Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.

Infographics, questionnaires, reference tables, and background quality report: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-2018.

Disclosure and confidentiality policy for identifiable survey data: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783018/MOD_Statistics_Disclosure_and_Confidentiality_Policy_for_Identifiable_Survey_Data.doc.pdf.

Army sexual harassment report.

'Report on an investigation into the nature, prevalence, prevention, and management of sexual harassment in the British Army in 2018': https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/736177/20180821_Sexual_harassment_report_2018_OS.PDF.

UK Civil Service People Survey: 2018 results.

Report, benchmark scores, and technical guide: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2018-results.

United States

Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI).

Details of a step-by-step process developed by DEOMI on climate assessment: https://www.deocs.net/public/index.cfm.

Sample DEOMI organizational climate survey: https://www.deocs.net/DocDownloads/Sample-DEOCS-Survey-Aug-2017-RMY.pdf.

Military Leadership Diversity Commission.

Military Leadership Diversity Commission (2010). 'Measuring service climate with an eye for diversity', Issue Paper 42, available at http://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Resources/Commission/docs/Issue%20Papers/Paper%2042%20-%20Measuring%20Service%20Climate.pdf.

Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) and Defense Research, Surveys and Statistics Center (RSSC).

DMDC and RSSC (2015). 'Workplace and gender relations survey of reserve component members: Tabulations of responses', available at https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a630234.pdf.

DMDC and RSSC (2015). 'Service Academy gender relations focus groups: Overview report', available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301860856_2015_Service_Academy_Gender_Relations_Focus_Groups_Overview_Report.

DMDC and RSSC (2016). 'Service Academy gender relations survey: Overview report', available at https://apps.dtic.mil/docs/citations/AD1030030.

Rand National Defense Research Institute.

Rand National Defense Research Institute. 'Sexual assault and sexual harassment in the US military – Highlights from the 2014 Rand Military Workplace Study', available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9841.html.

Rand National Defense Research Institute. 'Sexual assault and sexual harassment in the US Military, Vol. 1: Design of the 2014 Rand Military Workplace Study', available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR870z1.html.

NASA Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO).

ODEO (2014). 'NASA diversity and inclusion assessment survey', available at https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/files/SSC-2014-DI-Survey-Report.pdf.

Handbooks, reports, and research on gender and armed forces

Bastick, M. (2011). *Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector.* Geneva: DCAF.

Bastick, M. (2014). *Integrating a Gender Perspective into Internal Oversight within Armed Forces.* Geneva: DCAF, OSCE, and OSCE/ODIHR.

Bastick, M. (2015). *Gender and Complaints Mechanisms: A Handbook for Armed Forces and Ombuds Institutions.* Geneva: DCAF.

Blondin, M. (2016) 'Women in the armed forces: Promoting equality, putting an end to gender-based violence', report to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, Council of Europe, 1 June, available at http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?FileID=22789&Lang=EN.

Carreiras, H. and G. Kümmel (eds) (2008). *Women in the Military and in Armed Conflict.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Cawkill, P., A. Rogers, S. Knight, and L. Spear (2009). *Women in Ground Close Combat Roles: The Experiences of Other Nations and a Review of the Academic Literature.* Fareham: Defence Science and Technology Laboratory.

Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (2008). *Improving the Gender Balance: A Selected List of Best Practices.* Brussels: NATO.

Egnell, R., P. Hojem, and H. Berts (2012). *Implementing a Gender Perspective in Military Organisations and Operations: The Swedish Armed Forces Model.* Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Obradovic, L. (2014). *Gender Integration in NATO Military Forces.* Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

PfPC SSRWG and EDWG (2016). *Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military.* Geneva: DCAF and PfPC.

Polchar, J., T. Sweijs, P. Marten, and J. Galdiga (2014). *LGBT Military Personnel: A Strategic Vision for Inclusion.* The Hague: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies.

Rey Juan Carlos University, Australian Human Rights Commission, and Australian Defence Force (2015). 'UNSCR 1325 reload', available at https://www.nato.int/issues/nogp/meeting-records/2015/UNSCR1325-Reload_Report.pdf.

Schjølset, A. (2010). 'Closing the gender gap in the armed forces: The varying success of recruitment and retention strategies in NATO', PRIO Policy Brief 4, PRIO, Oslo.

Woodward, R. and C. Duncanson (eds) (2017). *The Palgrave International Handbook of Gender and the Military.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

This guide aims to collate and share knowledge and experience from NATO, NATO Partners, and other armed forces regarding good practice when developing, implementing, and evaluating a gender-responsive organizational climate assessment.

This guide is a tool for building confidence and internal capability in the development and use of organizational climate assessments in armed forces. It can help armed forces to ensure that the design, implementation, and evaluation of an organizational climate assessment are underpinned by good practice: both sound academic evidence and international experience. Conducting an organizational climate assessment, as outlined in this guide, will help armed forces to gain an understanding of the current state of their organizational climate and identify areas in need of improvement. The guide pays particular attention to how climate assessments can be used as a tool to help armed forces to improve gender balance and identify problems of discrimination or harassment.

The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) is an international foundation whose mission is to assist the international community in pursuing good governance and reform of the security sector. The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance develops and promotes norms and standards, conducts tailored policy research, identifies good practices and recommendations to promote democratic security sector governance, and provides in-country advisory support and practical assistance programmes.

DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance