

The Building Integrity Programme and Gender

“When we are developing strategies and tools to combat corruption we have to do this with our gender glasses on and analyse how corruption is affecting men and women”¹

The Building Integrity programme

The Building Integrity (BI) programme aims at strengthening transparency, integrity and accountability in the defence and security sector. The programme, which was established in 2007, is aimed at developing individual and institutional capacity and is supported by a number of practical tools and elements. At the Chicago summit, the NATO Heads of State and Government agreed that priority should be given to developing a systematic and sustainable approach to education and training. It was also agreed that BI should take into account and support NATO’s operations and should develop tailored programmes to support capacity building in the Afghan National Security Forces and in South Eastern Europe. While BI has given priority to these, the number of nations taking part in the programme and contributing expertise continues to grow and develop taking into account NATO’s agenda.

Both BI and NATO’s support for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, launched in 2007, are cross-cutting and require an innovative and flexible approach. They contribute to NATO’s crisis prevention and conflict management resolution. The two initiatives have developed a close synergy, trading best practice and sharing expertise.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda aims at increasing female participation in decision-making, the enhancement of women’s rights and the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations. Women often experience conflict differently from men and can offer valuable insights in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict decision-making. The same applies to corruption and Building Integrity efforts. Considerable progress has been made to mainstream the Women, Peace and Security into the NATO policy framework, directives and working mechanisms. The close co-operation developed with Building Integrity has been at the forefront in taking this initiative on board.

Why do we need to take gender into account in assessing risks, developing strategies to reduce corruption and promote good governance in the defence and security sector? Transparency, integrity, and accountability in the defence and security sector are ensured through the democratic representation of the population. Corruption is a security risk that affects the whole society. It undermines public trust and confidence, wastes resources, and limits the commanders’ ability to achieve operational objectives. It is therefore essential that both men and women are included in anti-corruption decision-making.

Women often experience corruption differently from men. They may face hardship in gaining access to public services, such as healthcare, or become subject to sexual exploitation as a form of corruption. Because of these experiences, women are often able to provide a more critical point of view to decision-making. Female staff working as civil servants or as military personnel may also experience corruption in their day to day work. Their perspective is an essential component to strengthening transparency, accountability and integrity in the defence and security sector.

The BI Programme has integrated a gender perspective into its methodology and development of practical tools. A gender balance is always taken into account when deploying BI mobile teams and experts. Conferences and seminars are used as opportunities to raise awareness on the importance of the gender perspective within the BI programme.



¹ Mari Skåre, the NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security in the Conference for Women’s Role in Reducing the Risk of Corruption and Promoting Good Practices in the Defence and Security Sector, NATO Headquarters, 8-9 March 2013.



What have we done so far?

- The BI Programme has integrated gender into its practical tools and elements from the self-assessment questionnaire to an emphasis on gender balance with our subject matter experts.
- A gender expert provided by Iceland continues to provide advice and support in developing and updating BI tools and practices.
- Gender and UNSCR Resolution 1325 issues will be taken into account in the updating of the BI Self Assessment Questionnaire and Peer Review Process
- A gender module was developed for the “Defence Leadership in Building Integrity” Course, which was held at the NATO school in Oberammergau, Germany on the 4 – 8 November 2013
- Nations are encouraged to nominate both men and women to the BI Pool of Subject Matter Expert, this ensure a gender perspective is taken into account in providing advice to nations
- The BI Conference conducted in Monterey, USA on the 25-28 February 2013 recommended a further mainstreaming of gender into BI tools
- A seminar on “Women’s Role in Reducing the Risk of Corruption and Promoting Good Practices in the Defence and Security Sector” was conducted 8-9 March 2013 at NATO HQ and recommended that this topic be addressed in further detail including conduct of regional events
- A regional seminar on “Women’s Role in Building Integrity and Promoting Good Practices in the Defence and Security Sector, Experience from South Eastern Europe“ was held in Montenegro on the 25 September 2013

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