



The Feminist Research Assessment Tool: Companion Document

Welcome to the Feminist Research Assessment Tool!

The purpose of this tool is to support anyone engaging in research to:

- (1) gain a practical awareness of what choices are being made in the knowledge-generation process and
- (2) reflect on how aligned a particular piece of gender-based violence (GBV) research is with a feminist methodology.

Note that COFEM's understanding of GBV centers women and girls in all their diversities, including queer and trans women. We focus on violence experienced by women and girls for the following reasons: (1) women and girls are at greater risk of experiencing certain types of violence globally, and (2) to emphasize the underlying cause of violence against women and girls in our work: gender inequality and discrimination.

User Guide

What is the Purpose of this Document?

This document serves as a companion document to the Feminist Research Assessment Tool, which can be accessed using this [link](#). This document presents the survey in PDF format, to support individuals, teams and organizations to move through the online survey.

Results from the Feminist Research Assessment Tool can only be generated by completing the survey [here](#).

Who can use this tool?

This tool can be used by anyone for any type of gender-based violence research, whether it is your own work or an external research project. It has been optimized to be used by people familiar with research focused on gender-based violence.

You may want to complete the questions as a team, as some sections require familiarity with specific aspects of the research process (e.g., research design, analysis, communications, etc.).

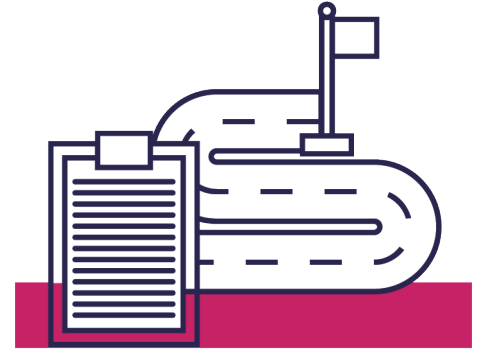


We acknowledge that the time and commitment to complete this survey may not be available for everyone. Please keep in mind that this survey is a resource, in whichever way works best for you/ your organization. When you are ready to complete the tool please set aside approximately one hour, or feel free to take pauses with the survey open and return to the tool as needed.

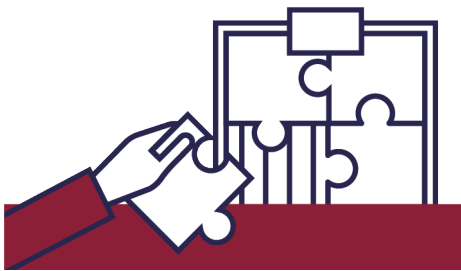
The tool will collect user input across six elements of the research process, which have been shown to be [a useful wayfinding framework](#) for thinking about the key choices made in research and helping you understand how the evidence is being generated. Each element has its own section in the tool:



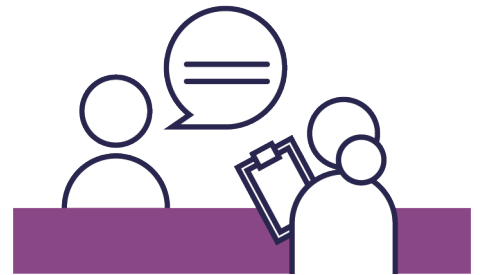
SECTION 1:
Infrastructure



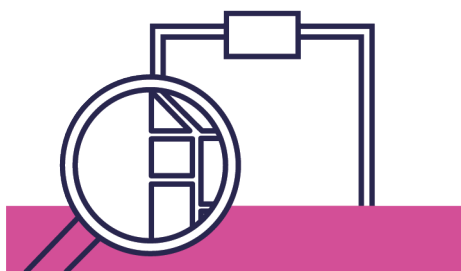
SECTION 2: Purpose



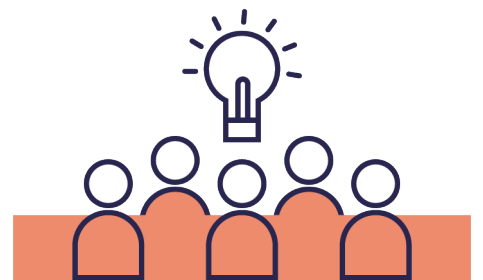
SECTION 3:
Research Design



SECTION 4:
Data Collection



SECTION 5: Analysis



SECTION 6:
Meaning Making
& Interpretation

In addition, several feminist principles are cross cutting throughout the tool, particularly: [decolonization](#), [do no harm](#), [intersectionality](#), and using a [survivor-led approach](#).

How do you use the tool?

To use this tool, you need to go through each assessment question choosing the option that best reflects the project you're assessing. Each answer may not be exact. We recommend that you choose the single option that seems to best match your experience. If a question is not relevant for your materials, you can select the "Not relevant" option.

If you are assessing an external research project, ideally the research team will have documented the answers to all the assessment questions included in this tool, either directly or in an appendix or background materials. If not, you may have to reach out to the research team or choose the "Not disclosed" option for some items.

The tool can be used to assess and understand many types of evidence, research and data projects, including (but not limited to):

- Program evaluation
 - Knowledge generated by activists and other civil society actors
 - Policy analysis
 - Practice-based learning, and
 - Academic-style inquiry.
- Researchers may also use this tool when starting a new initiative for guidance and planning purposes.

What will the tool tell you? *Feminist research paradigms acknowledge that research is not value-neutral or free from worldviews.*

In order to understand a piece of evidence, it is important to recognize the way that values and worldviews are embedded throughout the research process, and how this informs findings beyond what may be reported in the results. This is particularly true for research on gender-based violence, given that GBV is a systemic injustice that requires an analysis of context and systems beyond the individual level.

As such, this tool is primarily designed to deepen reflection and transparency around key choices (and the values and worldviews these decisions reflect). It will also generate an overall assessment of which of the six elements are more (or less) aligned with feminist principles as applied to GBV research (See Annex: COFEM's TipSheet on Feminist Approaches to Building Knowledge and Evidence on GBV).

The tool will not provide a specific set of detailed recommendations, however we have included several practical resources to guide your next steps.

What are the tool's limitations? For the purposes of this tool, we use "woman" to include anyone who self-identifies as a woman and "girl" to include anyone who self-identifies as a girl. While the tool can be used to assess any form of gender-based violence, we refer to violence against women and girls (VAWG) throughout the assessment. This reflects COFEM's area of expertise and focus, and the reality that women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence around the world.

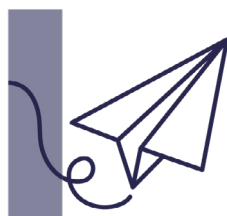
Of course, no single tool can adequately consider the nuances and specific context of every research project. This tool is not designed to give a single “score” that is the absolute gauge of “how feminist” a piece of research is (or is not). Similarly, it cannot provide a detailed set of specific recommendations that would be appropriate for the diverse research projects being assessed. Instead, the assessment is intended to provide useful guidance for further reflection and action, not a final judgment.

By promoting stronger alignment to feminist methodologies, this tool is designed to challenge the status quo and collectively move us towards more just and equitable research practices. In addition, the tool provides space for critical reflection and actualizing changes to more effectively center feminist principles in research.

Where did this tool come from?

This tool was co-created by [We all Count](#) and the [Coalition of Feminists for Social Change \(COFEM\)](#) with the hopes of facilitating the integration of feminist principles in research planning and implementation practices. In addition, 48 volunteers graciously contributed their energy and ideas to pretest and share feedback on an earlier version of this tool. We all Count is a project for equity in data. COFEM was founded in 2016 as an advocacy collective of thought leaders, activists, practitioners and academics working globally to end VAWG.

The collaboration between COFEM and We All Count was initiated to promote intentional, feminist practices in building evidence to address gender-based violence.



If you'd like to make a suggestion or make an inquiry about the tool, please send an email to support@weallcount.com



Section 1

Infrastructure

This section explores decision making and access to information related to funding and resource allocations.

1. Does the research include a concrete and transparent description of how money and other resources flow through the research?

No transparency (no discussion around funding/money)

Limited transparency (mentions large funders only)

Moderate transparency (includes a list of funds received to produce the research, and from who)

Good transparency (a list of funds received to produce the research, from who, and a list of major expenditures incurred)

Excellent transparency (a detailed funding map of all the places money is flowing to and from across all stakeholders involved in the research)

2. Does the research include a concrete and transparent description of which stakeholders have actual decision-making power about this research?

No transparency

Limited transparency

Moderate transparency

Good transparency

Excellent transparency

3. Does the research include a clear description of which stakeholders will retain ownership of the data and other intellectual property (IP) generated by this research? (In other words, who will own the data as well as obtain, disseminate and publish the results from this project? And who gets to decide who gets to see the results?)

No clarity (not mentioned/discussed)

Low clarity (limited discussion around IP)

Moderate clarity (moderate discussion of who will retain ownership)

High clarity (detailed discussion of who will retain ownership)

Very high clarity (detailed discussion of who will retain ownership, how IP decisions were made, etc.)

4. Are women from the impacted communities engaged as key decision-makers for this research?

No women from impacted communities as key decision-makers

A few women from the impacted communities as key decision-makers

Around half of decision-making roles are held by women from impacted communities.

Large majority of decision-making roles are held by women from impacted communities.

Not disclosed

5. Has the research explicitly described the choices made around the ownership of the data collected in this work?

No discussion around ownership of data

Limited discussion around ownership of data

Discussion around ownership of data with no ownership remaining with respondents

Discussion around ownership of data with limited ownership remaining with respondents

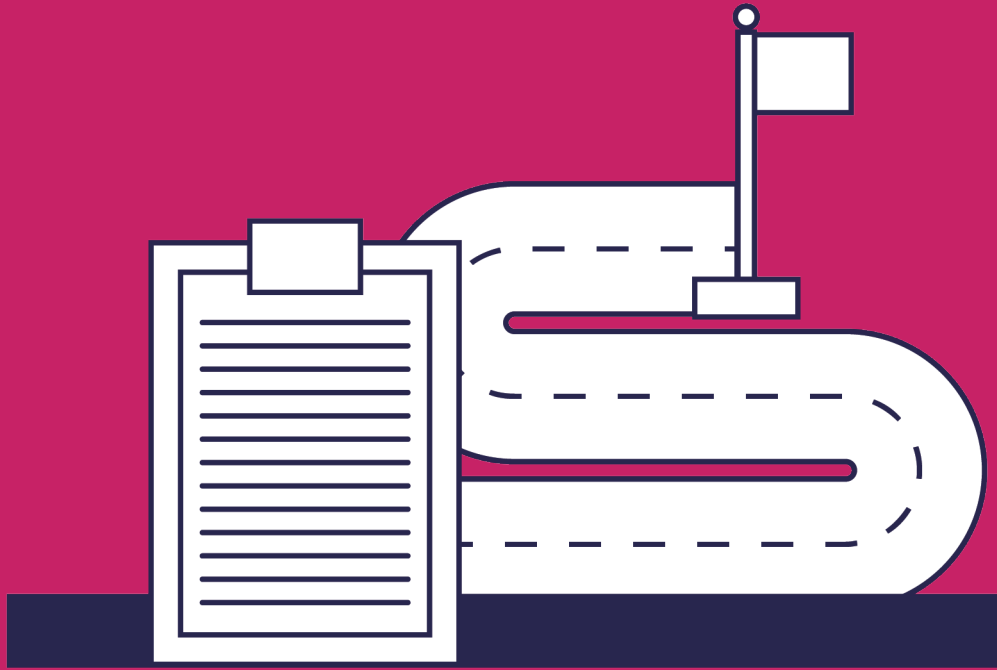
Discussion around ownership of data with full ownership remaining with respondents

6. Does the research mention the demographic information and intersectional identities (e.g. gender, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic, culture) of the researchers and other key stakeholders?

No, this is not mentioned.

Yes, this is mentioned broadly (though not in detail)

Yes, this is mentioned in detail



Section 2

Purpose

Now, let's explore the purpose and motivation for this research, including how violence and "success" are conceptualized.

1. Does the research include a clear purpose, stated in a way that the impacted communities can understand?

The purpose of this research is not stated

The purpose of this research is stated, however not in a clear way that the impacted communities can understand

The purpose of the research is stated in a way that some of the impacted communities can understand

The purpose of the research is clearly stated in a way that most of the impacted communities can understand

2. Is the definition of violence centered around an understanding that gender inequality (e.g., patriarchy/men's power over women) is the root cause of violence against women and girls?

Not at all (no mention of gender inequality)

Not very much (vague/unclear mention of gender inequality)

Somewhat (some mention of gender inequality, but not as the root cause of VAWG)

Very much (Gender inequality explicitly mentioned as root cause of VAWG)

Not disclosed

3. Were women, girls or other stakeholders from the impacted communities involved in conceptualizing the purpose for this research?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

4. Does the research's conceptualization of a successful/impactful project center the priorities of women and girls in the impacted community?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

5. Does the research's conceptualization of a successful/impactful project include an aspiration to transform gender inequality?

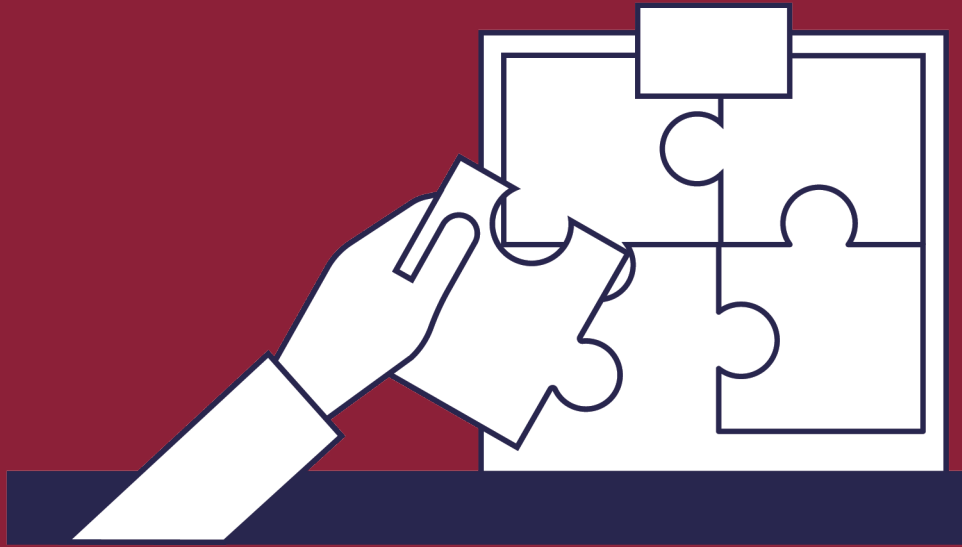
Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed



Section 3

Research Design

Next, let's look at the choices related to research design. This section explores aspects related to the research question, design, and methodology.

1. Were women, girls and other stakeholders from the impacted communities involved in formulating the main research question(s)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

2. If the research includes a focus on men/boys as perpetrators or survivors of GBV: does it maintain a framework for exploring gender inequality as the root cause of violence against women and girls?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no focus on men/boys)

3. If the research includes a focus on men/boys as perpetrators or survivors of GBV: does it maintain a framework of accountability to women, girls and feminist movements to end violence against women?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no focus on men/boys)

4. Does the research question(s) make clear that the onus to prevent violence is on governments, systems, practices, and policies (rather than on individual girls and women)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

5. Is the research designed in a way that will produce evidence that can be directly applied to bring about positive change?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

6. Were women and/or girls from the impacted communities consulted when deciding what data is best suited to answering the research question (if the research involved primary data collection, this includes where/from whom data should be collected)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

7. Were activists, service providers and/or other leaders from the impacted community consulted when deciding what data is best suited to answering the research question (if the research involved primary data collection, this includes where/from whom data should be collected)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

8. Was there a consultation with other researchers, or an internal process, to determine the most reliable methodology to address the research question?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

9. Is the research methodology designed with attention to local cultural and social norms?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed



Section 4

Data Collection

In this section we will look at the data collection choices and processes. This section asks about the collection of new data and acquisition of existing data.

1. Did the researchers gain informed consent in an anti-oppressive and anti-coercive manner? This includes transparency, understanding, and the option to opt-out at any point, without consequences.

Not at all (aspects of informed consent are likely experienced as oppressive and/or coercive)

Not very much (major gaps in ensuring anti-oppressive/ anti-coercive process)

Somewhat (some gaps in ensuring anti-oppressive/ anti-coercive process)

Very much (strong adherence to anti-oppressive and anti-coercive process)

Not disclosed (no mention of informed consent process)

Not relevant (no primary data collection)

2. Did individuals participating in the data collection have a clear understanding of who will maintain ownership of the data?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no primary data collection)

3. Did individuals participating in the data collection have an opportunity to ask any questions, withdraw consent, and make requests about how they would be quoted/represented in the findings?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no primary data collection)

4. Is the data collection method explicit about prioritizing the safety, confidentiality, and well-being of individuals participating in the data collection (e.g., using a trauma-informed approach as appropriate)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no primary data collection)

5. Does the data being collected to explore GBV allow for an intersectional analysis (e.g., is the data collection tool sensitive to differences in how people categorize their gender, sexuality, social, religious, racial/ethnic and other identities?)

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no primary data collection)

6. Do the people collecting data have foundational training on gender equality, GBV, survivor centered approaches, and power dynamics?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no primary data collection)

7. Does the data collection process have built-in pauses, debriefs and consultations to reflect on the impact of the data collection itself and make necessary adjustments?

Not at all

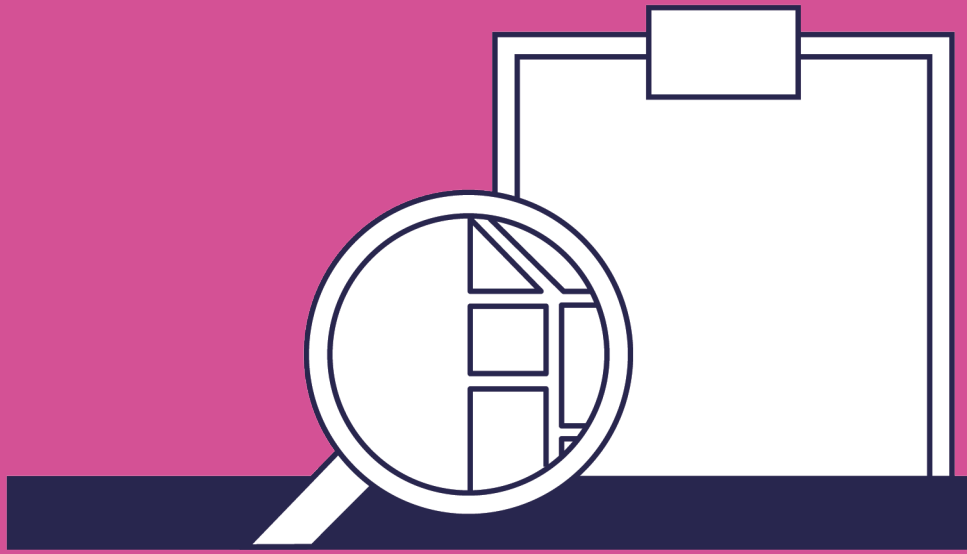
Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant (no primary data collection)



Section 5

Analysis

Good work. We are almost complete. This section will explore the way the analysis was conducted.

1. Is the research you're exploring quantitative, qualitative or a mix of both?

Qualitative

Quantitative

Mixed methods (i.e. both qualitative and quantitative)

2. If the analysis is primarily qualitative, did the development of the codebook, or thematic areas for exploration, take into considerations the priorities and contextual realities of women and girls in the impacted communities?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant

3. If the analysis is primarily qualitative, is it clear to what extent participants in the research represent the diversity of identities in the community?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant

4. If the analysis includes quantitative descriptive statistics such as rates or averages, is it transparent about what numerators and denominators are used?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant

5. If the analysis includes missing data, does the analysis adjust for the missing data in a way that amplifies the voices of girls, women and communities in their diversities?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

Not relevant

6. If the analysis includes causal or impact analysis, have the researchers aligned the mathematical model with the mental models (e.g., worldviews) of those most impacted?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

7. Does the analysis include multiple levels, including systemic and structural levels?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

8. Does the analysis include an intersectional framework– e.g., does it provide a nuanced analysis of how the positioning of individuals and communities at the intersection of systems of oppression influence the findings?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not relevant

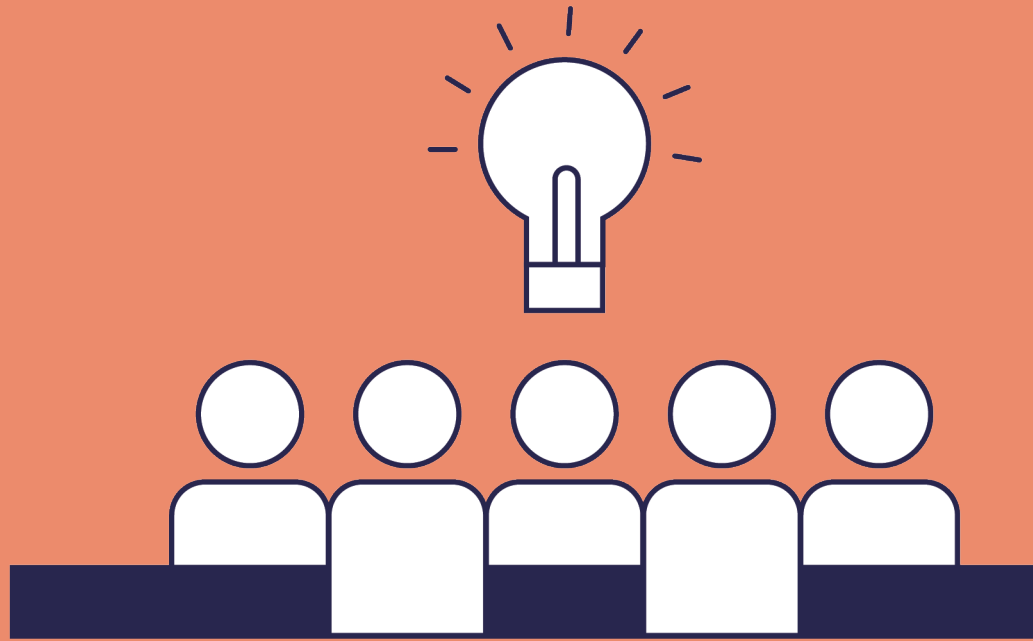
9. Are the analytic choices documented in a transparent way that non-technical people who are participating in the research can understand?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much



Section 6

Meaning Making & Interpretation

This is our last section. Here we will ask some questions about how the findings were reached and communicated.

1. Did the process of interpreting findings include collaboration from people with practice-based knowledge?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

2. Did the process of interpreting findings include collaboration with people from the impacted community (in addition to any community-based researchers on the team)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Not disclosed

3. Does the interpretation include appropriate contextualization of the findings?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

4. Does the process of reporting findings include an accessible feedback loop? For example, is there an accessible way for people to give feedback directly to the author(s) of published findings?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

5. Are findings communicated in a language that is appropriate, accessible and useful to the people who participated in the research? (Note: this may require supplemental communications / materials beyond academic or policy papers)

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

6. Are findings designed/packaged in a way that is optimized for those who participated in the research, and not just for the researchers?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

7. Does the communication of the findings align with the explicit purpose of the research (e.g., if the research is to strengthen survivor services, are findings communicated via a platform service providers can access and understand)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

8. When safe to do so, are all contributing stakeholders involved in the research acknowledged in the presentation of findings (reports, academic papers, social media messages, powerpoints etc.)?

Not at all

Not very much

Somewhat

Very much

Congratulations, you have completed the Feminist Research Assessment Tool!

As noted in the User Guide, this tool provides an overall assessment of which of the six elements are more (or less) aligned with feminist principles as applied to GBV research. Please refer to the Annex for COFEM's TipSheet on Feminist Approaches to Building Knowledge and Evidence on GBV as well as other practical resources you may find useful in actioning these results.

