



WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW

FAQ – WBL 2025

Methodology Workshops

OVERVIEW

1. How can *Women, Business and the Law* support government who want to reform their laws and policies. Could you please describe the process and the type of support that the WBL team provides?

The *Women, Business and the Law* (WBL) team supports governments in developing gender action plans and identifying reform entry points through several key initiatives:

- [Cross-country comparable data](#): WBL provides data on the enabling environment for women workers and entrepreneurs, which is crucial for understanding the current landscape and identifying areas for improvement.
- Country- and topic-specific deep dives: The team conducts [research](#) tailored to specific countries, regions, and topics, aimed at creating economic opportunities for women. This research helps in understanding the unique challenges and opportunities within different socio-economic contexts.
- [Good practice examples](#): WBL offers examples of successful reforms from various countries, which can guide policymakers in implementing similar changes. These examples serve as benchmarks for effective strategies in promoting gender equality.
- Economic analysis of gender-equal laws: WBL investigates the economic impacts of gender-equal legal frameworks, including models to quantify economic gains and legislative impacts. Research outputs demonstrate the positive link between gender-equal laws and economic development. This evidence supports the case how legal reforms can provide women with access to jobs and promote private sector development.
- Methodology workshops: [add description]

In addition, WBL continuously expands its comprehensive [research](#) agenda to generate actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations that support policymakers in fostering gender equality and women's economic empowerment. For example:

- Subnational data collection: Building on work conducted across eight cities in Nigeria, WBL is replicating this approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aiming to understand local implementation of laws and policies.
- Gallup survey insights: In partnership with Gallup, WBL collected data in Bangladesh, Brazil, and Nigeria to explore perceptions of women's business capabilities, access to finance, workforce participation, and childcare options, to better understand how social norms and institutional barriers influence legal enforcement.
- Refinement and exploration of indicators: WBL has enhanced its methodology by refining indicators to understand women's economic opportunities better and explores related topics, such as intersection of legal frameworks with global issues like climate change, crime, migration, and social norms.

2. Does *Women, Business and the Law* take into account the international instruments that countries have signed or ratified?

While *Women, Business and the Law* does not directly assess whether an economy has signed or ratified specific international instruments, international standards are indirectly taken into account in the design of the indicators. Each of the ten *Women, Business and the Law* topics is

anchored in relevant international legal and policy frameworks, including core instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO), among others. These standards serve as benchmarks for assessing whether national laws align with global best practices in advancing gender equality. Therefore, when an economy reforms its national legislation to comply with international norms, and the reform is codified in legally binding national laws, those changes are reflected in *Women, Business and the Law* scores, provided they meet the specific indicator criteria. For a detailed list of the international standards considered, please refer to Annex C of the *Women, Business and the Law Methodology Handbook*, which outlines all international instruments that inform the Legal Frameworks behind each topic.

3. In the interest of identifying gaps in opportunities between men and women, how do you explore the impact of cultural norms and practices that maintain gender segregations in economies where there are no legal barriers?

Women, Business and the Law primarily focuses on laws and policies that can be clearly identified and compared across all 190 economies. Both the Legal Frameworks and Supportive Frameworks pillars operate under general and/or specific parameters and are designed to assess formal structures. Because social norms are complex and context-specific, they are not explicitly measured within these pillars.

However, *Women, Business and the Law* is taking active steps to incorporate insights related to social norms into its broader research agenda. The Enforcement Perceptions (EP) pillar is part of this effort, aiming to capture the extent to which laws are enforced in practice. In addition, *Women, Business and the Law* is undertaking research projects that explore social norms, perceptions, and experiences at the individual level, helping to build a more complete understanding of the barriers women face beyond the legal text.

4. Regarding the Enforcement Perceptions pillar, what exactly is enforcement? Do you have a definition?

Enforcement is defined as the act of ensuring compliance with the law or making sure rules or laws are followed (Justia Legal Dictionary), encompassing both the practical implementation of laws and the legal duty to uphold them. For more information, please refer to page 13 of the [Methodology Handbook](#).

5. The Enforcement Perceptions pillar asks about the enforcement of laws by public authorities. Who exactly are the public authorities?

Public authorities include the executive, regulatory, and judicial bodies responsible for implementing, monitoring and upholding of laws in that specific economy, ensuring compliance, and maintaining functioning mechanisms. Public authorities responsible for enforcing laws on violence against women may include police, civil and criminal courts, special courts on violence against women, equal opportunities committees, etc.

6. How are individuals' answers to the enforcement perception question aggregated into the final score for each economy?

The economy level Enforcement Perceptions pillar is calculated in several steps. First, the Enforcement Perceptions indicator score for each indicator is calculated by taking the median value of the responses for each indicator in the economy. Then, the Enforcement Perceptions topic score is calculated by taking the average of the four indicator scores for each topic in the economy. Finally, the 10 topic scores are averaged to construct the economy level Enforcement Perceptions pillar. For more information, please refer to page 17 of the [Methodology Handbook](#).

7. What is the intermediate level in the Enforcement Perceptions pillar, and how do you measure it?

In the WBL 2026 Enforcement Perceptions pillar, respondents can choose from five options to indicate to which extent laws are enforced, or equal rights are upheld. The options are: not at all, rarely, moderately, mostly, and fully, with “moderately” representing the intermediate level. WBL uses this five-point Likert scale for its ability to offer a range of options beyond binary answers while maintaining simplicity. A five-point scale was also used in a pilot survey for the Enforcement Perceptions questions and showed promising results for clarity and relevance. In addition to these pre-defined response choices, WBL offers respondents the opportunity to provide additional information through open-ended comments.

8. Can you elaborate on the formula used to account for partial scoring in the Enforcement Perceptions question?

The Enforcement Perceptions score is based on expert responses which are first converted to a 0–4 scale (from “Not at all enforced” to “Fully enforced”). This number is then scaled to 0–100 by multiplying by 25. However, for Enforcement Perceptions questions linked to Legal Frameworks questions that have partial score options, there’s an additional step: the resulting score is multiplied by the Legal Frameworks score. For example:

- Country A has a complete Legal Frameworks score (i.e., score of 1). If experts say laws are “fully enforced” (i.e., score of 4), the final score remains 100.
- Country B lacks one-third of the Legal Frameworks (i.e., score = 0.66). Even if experts also say “fully enforced,” the final score becomes $100 \times 0.66 = 66$, to reflect that only part of the necessary Legal Frameworks is in place.

This method ensures that full enforcement only results in a full score when all required legal elements exist.