



WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW

FAQ – WBL 2025

Methodology Workshops

SAFETY

1. **Certain categories of women have not been considered in the scoring. For example, laws that protect educators and staff from sexual harassment are not considered under the sexual harassment in education question. What is the reason for this?**

Women, Business and the Law applies some parameters to ensure that the data are comparable across economies. Specifically, questions on sexual harassment in education examine laws applicable to students, including students over 18. This reflects the vulnerability of students and the importance of ensuring a safe learning environment. For educators and staff, their relationship to the institution is one of employment rather than education. Therefore, their right to a workplace free from harassment would be protected under laws addressing sexual harassment in employment. This separation ensures clarity and consistency in measuring whether all individuals—across different life stages and roles—are protected under the law.

2. **Is there an overlap between the pillars? For example, enforcement of laws may fall into the Legal Frameworks pillar if we look at whether laws require police to act on complaints, in addition to looking at whether the law provides criminal penalties for sexual harassment or domestic violence.**

While issues such as enforcement might appear to overlap across different areas, the *Women, Business and the Law* methodology intentionally distinguishes between the measurement of laws and perceptions of their enforcement. Specifically, within the Enforcement Perceptions pillar, *Women, Business and the Law* only evaluates expert perceptions of how existing laws—identified by the WBL Legal Frameworks indicators—are enforced in practice. It does not assess the specific legal mandates for enforcement bodies like the police. For instance, a legal requirement for police to act on complaints is not currently measured—neither under the Legal Frameworks pillar nor under the Enforcement Perceptions pillar. This separation allows for a clear distinction between the de jure existence of laws and their perceived de facto functionality in practice.

3. **Is there a direct involvement of survivors in the economies covered in preparing this report?**

Women, Business and the Law collects its data primarily by administering structured questionnaires to legal experts—such as practicing lawyers, academics, and judges—in each economy examined. However, for the Safety topic, *Women, Business and the Law* has broadened its approach to also include responses from civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly those that work directly with survivors of gender-based violence. These organizations often provide frontline services, such as legal aid, shelter, or psychosocial support, and are therefore well-placed to inform the team about whether these services are available and accessible in practice. Their insights help complement the legal data by providing a more grounded perspective on how laws are implemented and whether survivors can meaningfully access protections. So, while *Women, Business and the Law* does not interview survivors directly, the organizations answering data collection questionnaires often reflect survivors' experiences in their responses.

4. Does the Legal Frameworks pillar examine subnational/state level/customary laws as well? Similarly for services, do you look at the provision of services at the community level?

Women, Business and the Law evaluates the legal and policy frameworks applicable to the main business city in each economy. This approach means that it assesses any law—whether federal, state, municipal, or customary—that applies to a woman residing in that city. The same methodology is applied to services: *Women, Business and the Law* only considers government-provided or government-funded services available in the main business city. This methodological choice ensures that data are comparable across the 190 economies covered, allowing for consistent trend analysis while still considering the legal diversity present in federal or decentralized systems.

Recently, *Women, Business and the Law* initiated a new study to more explicitly capture subnational variations. The first subnational study focuses on Nigeria, examining laws and policy instruments across eight different states. Other federal economies will follow, enabling the collection of more granular and nuanced data, particularly in contexts where legal protections and service availability vary significantly across regions.

5. In the Legal Frameworks pillar, you examine domestic violence laws, which can be gender neutral. However, under the Supportive Frameworks pillar, you use the term “violence against women”. These are not the same. Why is that?

One of the Safety Legal Frameworks indicators examines laws on domestic violence, defined as a form of gender-based violence commonly directed against women, occurring in the private sphere—within families, households, or intimate relationships. While the term is “domestic violence,” the focus remains on how the law protects women specifically, consistent with the gendered nature of the issue.

Under the Supportive Frameworks pillar, *Women, Business and the Law* uses the broader term “violence against women” because this pillar looks at policy instruments—such as national action plans, access to justice measures, services, and monitoring bodies—that are designed to support the implementation of all four forms of violence covered under the Legal Frameworks pillar: child marriage, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and femicide. The terminology reflects the scope of what is measured: a specific legal protection from domestic violence under the Legal Frameworks pillar, and a broader policy framework to address four forms of violence against women under the Supportive Frameworks pillar.

6. Do you analyze trends with all the data collected? How will you compare trends given the change in methodology?

Yes, *Women, Business and the Law* analyzes trends using the legal data collected. In fact, it has developed a historical dataset capturing legal reforms since the year 1970, which allows for the examination of long-term reform trajectories and patterns across economies. This was a key focus of the [Women, Business and the Law 2023 report](#), which explored five decades of legal reform related to women’s economic participation.

With the methodological updates introduced in 2024, including new questions and expanded coverage—especially under the Safety indicator—*Women, Business and the Law* is now conducting historical analysis to identify when the newly measured legal provisions were adopted. This work will help maintain continuity, track legal reforms over time, and study global and regional trends, even under the revised framework.

7. Is it possible to link the results of the Safety topic with other topics like Work, Childcare, etc.? Does the Safety topic have an effect in improving the results for other topics?

Women, Business and the Law focuses on measuring laws and regulations rather than outcomes, and it does not evaluate causal links between legal reforms in different areas—such as violence against women and reforms in labor or family law. However, there is a growing body of empirical research that explores these connections. For instance, several studies have found that laws protecting women from gender-based violence are associated with improved economic outcomes for women, including increased labor force participation, higher earnings, and better health and education indicators - For more information, please refer to page 26 of the [Methodology Handbook](#). Similarly, research studies the impact of protections in the areas of family law, education, labor law, social protections, and infrastructure on gender-based violence.

Therefore, while *Women, Business and the Law* itself does not directly measure these linkages, the broader evidence base indicates that legal protections across different domains can be mutually reinforcing, and addressing violence against women is an essential component of a comprehensive strategy for women's empowerment and economic inclusion.

8. How do you take into account gender-motivated killings which are not necessarily classified as femicide?

Women, Business and the Law's femicide indicator captures both (1) specific criminal provisions that define and typify femicide as a distinct offense, and (2) provisions that aggravate the penalty for the intentional killing of a woman when a gender-related motivation is present. This approach allows for the inclusion of gender-motivated killings even in countries where the term "femicide" is not explicitly used in the law, but where the gender-based nature of the crime is legally recognized and punished more severely. By measuring both classification and aggravating circumstances, *Women, Business and the Law* aims to reflect a broader range of legal responses to gender-motivated killings of women, while maintaining consistency across the 190 economies covered.

9. Will the questions listed in the questionnaires be reflected in the final results report in March 2026? Or are some of them just for adding more elaboration for other scored questions?

The sub-questions within the Safety topic are designed to guide the scoring of the Safety indicators. Although not all sub-questions will be individually analyzed in the *Women, Business and the Law* 2026 report, all answers to these sub-questions will be published on the *Women, Business and the Law* website upon the release of the 2026 report. This will enable users to delve into the complete dataset and gain a clearer understanding of how each score was derived.