

WESTERN BALKANS STOCKTAKING WORKSHOP ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IMPLEMENTATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

EXPERT DISCUSSION AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

February 28 - March 1, 2023, Tirana, Albania

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

UN Women grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

The UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECA RO) was established in Istanbul, Turkey in early 2014. It provides support and oversight to Country Offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine. In addition, the Regional Office directly supports programme and project presence in Kosovo¹, Serbia, The Republic of North Macedonia, Tajikistan and Turkiye. UN Women also supports activities in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Montenegro, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan where UN Women is a non-resident agency (NRA).

UN Women ECA RO has positioned gender responsive budgeting (GRB) as one of the priority areas in which the ECA RO has unique technical expertise grounded in the combined technical skills that has been cultivated with respect to budgetary processes including GRB and the overarching expertise and credibility the Office has with respect to GEWE. Furthermore, this work is in line with global Strategic Plan 2022-2025 under Outcome 2: Financing for gender equality: Public and private financing advance gender equality through gender responsive financing policies, strategies, and instruments.

Over the past years, through the technical and financial support, UN Women different initiatives have been carried out in Western Balkans' countries and territories with the goal of strengthening democratic governance and advance women's rights aiming at mainstreaming gender in policy planning and budgeting. As result, GRB has increasingly been recognized as important tool for advancing de facto gender equality, supporting the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda and other global goals as well as for contributing to the achievements of the commitments of the Western Balkans under the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 (GAP III) where the EU strives to ensure and strengthen the economic and social rights of women and girls.

To deepen the work previously done, launch new initiatives, and ensure the sustainability of the interventions on GRB, UN Women initiated a regional programme with participation of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, and North Macedonia "Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans" (2020-2024). The main programme approach is transformative financing as an enabler factor for policy and financing actions to accelerate implementation of existing national and international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Western Balkans.

¹ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999

Western Balkans stocktaking workshop on Gender Responsive Budgeting implementation at local level

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The programme includes activities focused on enhancing the institutionalization of GRB at central level and local level. The programme is structured around two outcomes:

- By 2024, national and local governments apply gender responsive budgeting to integrate gender equality principles in public financing processes
- By 2024, public oversight bodies CSOs, women including the disadvantaged, demand transparency and accountability of public policies and budgets to gender equality processes

The regional nature of the project also contributes to the exchange of best practices and learning from the challenges in the region while implementing GRB and demanding accountability from respective governments.

With over 10 years of experience in the implementation of GRB initiatives across the Western Balkans, it is the time to mark achievements, identify challenges and pitfalls and design future interventions.

Within the scope of the regional project, since 2020 significant progress has been made on strengthening the capacities of local governments to apply GRB tools in their plans and budgets in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, and North Macedonia. Throughout this project, the local government officials increased capacities to apply GRB tools in their plans and budgets with the targeted trainings. Additionally, UN Women project team established cooperation and identified the capacity gaps and training needs of the local level officials, through the dedicated needs assessment and mapping exercises.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this workshop is to take stock of what has been done so far, exchange experience on GRB implementation stemming from expert engagement at local and sub-national level.

It will also provide an opportunity to strengthen the capacities and improve knowledge of locally engaged GRB experts on the GRB implementation in the region.

Furthermore, new avenues of GRB interventions in the future will be also discussed during the workshop.

The workshop will bring together experts working on GRB at local level from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia and UN Women GRB project staff for 2 days in Tirana, Albania.

FORMAT

The regional workshop will take place on February 28 - March 1, 2023 in Tirana International Hotel & Conference Center in Tirana. The workshop will be held in person and it contains sessions with presentations from the participating countries on best practices and lessons learned in the region followed by plenary discussions.

LANGUAGE

The workshop will be English.