



# COORDINATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

Regional evaluation of UN Women's contribution to UN system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women in Europe and Central Asia

Evaluation Brief



December 2016



In 2010, the UN general Assembly established United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to assist Member States and the United Nations system to progress more effectively and efficiently towards realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). UN Women plays a crucial coordination role within the UN system to achieve this goal.

UN Women's composite mandate includes three roles: a normative role to support inter-governmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women, an operational role to help Member States implement international standards, and a coordination role to promote the UN system's accountability on GEEW. The UN coordination role, which is the newest of the three, consists of leading, promoting accountability, and coordinating (system-wide and inter-agency), which includes gender mainstreaming support.

UN Women has been present in the ECA region since 2011. The roll out of the UN Women Regional Architecture was completed in 2014 with the merger of the two former UNIFEM sub-regional offices in Kazakhstan and Slovakia into a Regional Office based in Turkey.

The UN has two important regional coordination mechanisms in the ECA region to ensure coherence – the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) led by the UN Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE) and the Regional UNDG (R-UNDG), under which UN Women, along with other UN agencies, participates in the ECA Regional Peer Support Group (PSG). In 2015, the ECA Regional Working Group on Gender (UN-RWGG) was established under the RCM and the R-UNDG to ensure a coordinated UN system approach to promoting GEEW in the region.

Building on a corporate evaluation of the same topic, the UN Women ECA regional office undertook a regional evaluation of this UN system coordination role on GEEW.

Access the full report at <http://gate.unwomen.org>

## What are the key evaluation conclusions?

**The following main messages emerged from the findings and conclusions of this evaluation:**

**The ECA Regional Office is positioned to play a strategic role in UN system coordination at the regional level. There are expectations for it to proactively lead an inclusive and collective effort on GEEW that draws on the strengths of all entities.** UN Women has played a key role at regional level through its effective contributions to the Peer Support Group and by leading or co-convening efforts to fill gaps not only in the gender architecture that supports both the R-UNDG and the RCM in the region, but also in the programming architecture of the R-UNDG. There is a shared recognition among UN entities consulted that GEEW coordination needs to be strengthened and that UN Women has a key role to play.

**UN Women offices have made visible efforts to clarify (internally and externally) the scope and nature of their UN system coordination mandate. Nevertheless, this mandate continues to be subject to a range of different interpretations and related expectations and these affect stakeholder perspectives on the relevance of UN Women's approach.** UN Women's role in supporting gender mainstreaming across the UN system is not fully understood. Although UN Women at a global level has reiterated that each agency is responsible for its own gender mainstreaming processes and programming, there are still some countries in which there are numerous demands placed on UN Women to support individual agencies.

**UN Women's coordination efforts have contributed to strengthening the capacity of the UN system for addressing GEEW at country level. Making the link between activities associated with the UN coordination mandate and development results (for both the UN system as a whole and UN Women) is still a challenge.** Effective coordination is conceptualized as a means to ensure that the UN system is better able to deliver on GEEW-related results. However, until now, neither UN Women nor other UN entities have systematically tracked the specific effects of their coordination work on development results. This makes it difficult to systematically link achievements in UN system coordination with substantive changes on the ground.

**UN Women has added value to the work of the UN system with regard to developing and implementing normative frameworks that strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment, and linking global initiatives to local needs/priorities.** The main characteristics that have allowed UN Women to add value in and through its coordination function are its GEEW-focused and cross-sectoral mandate, its GEEW and thematic expertise and experience, and its extensive and diverse networks at country level.

**Formal interagency fora or mechanisms such as the GTG are still crucial to ensuring coherence and reduced duplication on GEEW in the UN system, despite notable gaps in their capacity.** GTGs still suffer from capacity gaps that are linked to the gender capacity of individual UN entities as well as to operating features of the group.

**In the UN system, there are still important institutional barriers for accountability on GEEW commitments and this is reflected in the limited progress towards use of horizontal accountability mechanisms at the country level. UN Women faces persistent challenges in this area.** Underlying this is the nature of institutional incentives in the UN and whether they encourage or motivate UN actors to seek and partake in coordinated efforts related to GEEW and in shared accountability standards at the country level.

**UN Women has not fully capitalized on its relationships with civil society organizations (especially women's movements) in its coordination role within the UN system.** There is potential to more fully leverage their voices in ways that could deepen gender analysis in UN planning and programming documents and ultimately help strengthen UN system accountability.

There is still a mismatch between UN Women’s broad mandate, stakeholder expectations of that mandate, and the resourcing of UN Women. Funding shortfalls affect UN Women’s available resources to engage in UN coordination related efforts, and also its reputation and strategic positioning at country and regional levels. The optimal implementation of UN Women coordination mandate has also been affected by the relative

prioritizing that UN Women gives to this mandate area and the level and type of strategic direction and guidance that is provided by HQ. Tensions still lie in the balance between UN Women’s operational and coordination mandates and how synergies can be created between the two. This requires thoughtful and strategic resource allocation planning for all three dimensions of the UN Women mandate.

## How can UN Women improve its coordination mandate in the Europe and Central Asia Region? Recommendations to move forward

**UN Women’s Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia should:**

1. Continue to strengthen the strategic aspects of its UN system coordination at the regional level by playing a proactive role in engaging and facilitating discussions on strategic issues and filling gaps in GEEW knowledge in the region.
2. Enhance its support to countries on UN system coordination, as feasible. It is acknowledged the ability to provide such guidance and support is constrained by resources available to the Regional Office and/or by the nature of the guidance (e.g., some of it would need to be issued by HQ and/or the UNDG).

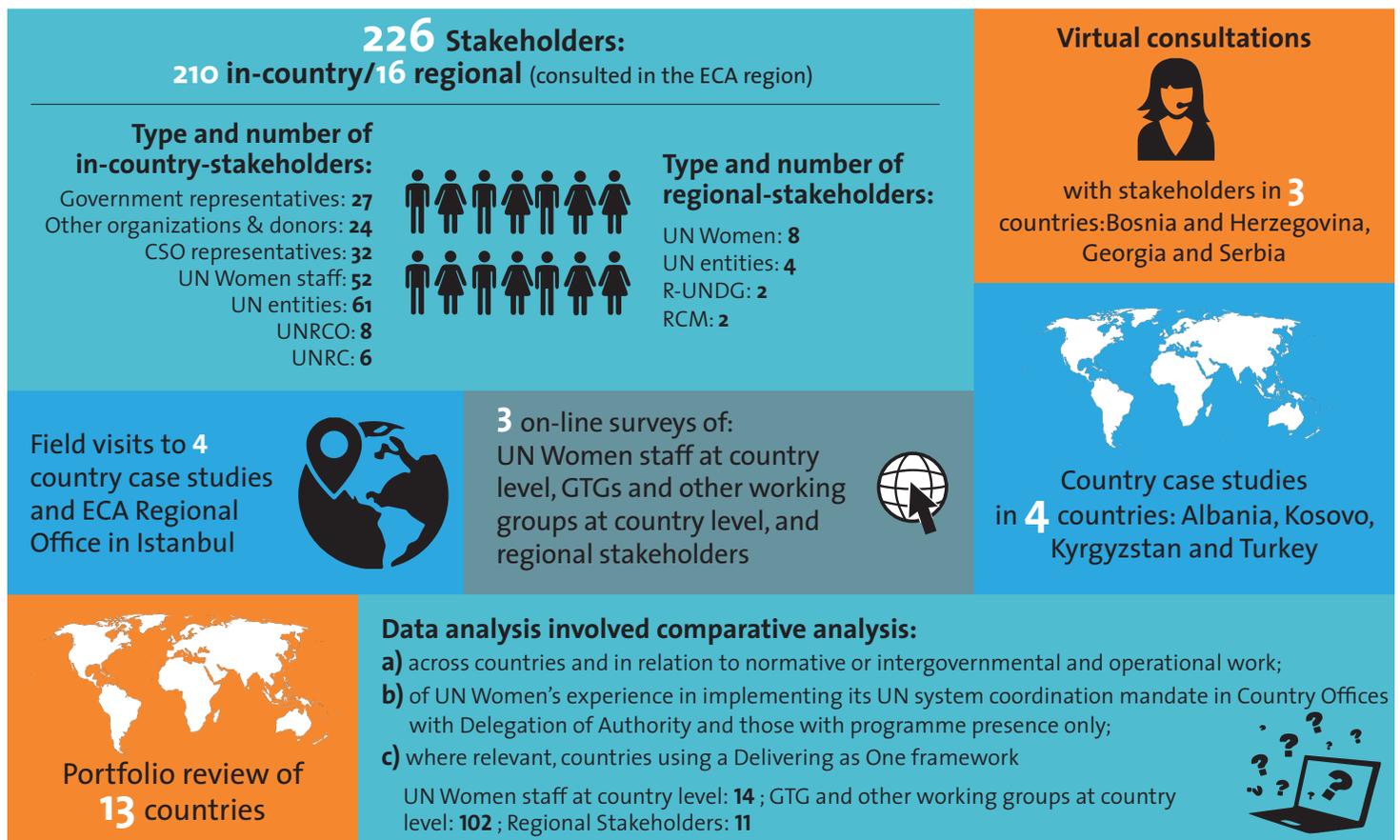
**UN Women offices with delegation of authority in the region should:**

3. Articulate an overall strategy and approach to GEEW coordination, including a clear strategy to influence and lead the UNCT on GEEW, coordinate the GTG, and enhance capacity of UN agencies to mainstream GE.

**UN Women offices with no delegation of authority in the region should:**

4. Articulate strategic priorities for GEEW coordination within their overall mandate based on an assessment of the institutional environment, their own resource base, the donor environment, and the needs and opportunities within the country context.

## Stakeholder data collected for this corporate evaluation



UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN member states as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

UN Women's composite mandate includes three roles: a normative role to support inter-governmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women, an operational role to help Member States implement international standards, and a coordination role to promote the UN system's accountability on GEEW. The UN coordination role, which is the newest of the three, consists of leading, promoting accountability, and coordinating (system-wide and inter-agency), which includes gender mainstreaming support.

Website: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation>

*Disclaimer: The text of this brief does not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UN Women accepts no responsibility for error.*

UN Women Regional Office  
for Europe and Central Asia  
Abide-i Hürriyet Cad. İstiklal Sok.  
No: 11 KEY Plaza Kat:8  
34381 Şişli, İstanbul, Turkey

<http://eca.unwomen.org>  
[www.facebook.com/unwomeneuropecentralasia](http://www.facebook.com/unwomeneuropecentralasia)  
[www.twitter.com/unwomeneca](http://www.twitter.com/unwomeneca)  
[www.youtube.com/unwomen](http://www.youtube.com/unwomen)  
[www.flickr.com/unwomeneuropecentralasia](http://www.flickr.com/unwomeneuropecentralasia)

We encourage you to email us with your feedback: [isabel.suarez@unwomen.org](mailto:isabel.suarez@unwomen.org)

Cover Photo: UN Women/Janarbek Amankulov