

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of UN Women’s work on GRB in the Europe and Central Asia Region with specific focus on the Regional Programme “Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans” (2020-2024) (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹ and Serbia)

1. 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.

UN Women has been present in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region since its creation in 2011 and prior to UN Women’s creation the former UNIFEM was also operational in the region. Currently in the ECA region, the Regional Office (RO) provides support and oversight to UN Women Offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Georgia Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine. The ECA Regional Office Strategic Note 2022-2025 is aligned with the global UN Women Strategic Plan.

UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (the “ECARO”) has positioned GRB as one of the priority areas in which the ECARO has unique technical expertise grounded in the combined technical skills in budgetary processes including GRB and the overarching expertise and credibility in GEWE. This work is aligned with Outcome 2: Financing for gender equality of UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) has become an internationally acknowledged tool for achieving gender equality. This tool was first pioneered in Australia in 1984, with a federal government assessment of the budget’s impact on women. A decade later, the concept was endorsed by the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. Presently, more than 90 countries all around the world pursue a variety of GRB initiatives that span civil society, government and international organizations. Responding to the demand from countries to introduce or institutionalize GRB, the UN Women contributes extensively to building interest, capacity and commitment to incorporate a gender equality perspective in budgetary processes and practices.

UN Women’s supported GRB initiatives operate on different levels and vary in their objectives, but they are united in their ultimate goal: to contribute to the realization of women’s rights and gender equality through changes in budget priorities as well as increased women’s participation in budgetary debates and decision-making. Since 2009, in ECA Region, GRB initiatives have taken place in the following countries:

¹ *All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Albania, BiH, North Macedonia, Moldova, Georgia, Serbia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Turkiye; Belarus and Ukraine.

1.1. Regional Programme “Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans” (from now on “the regional programme”)

Over the past years, through technical and financial support, UN Women has carried out different initiatives in Western Balkans’ countries and territories to strengthen democratic governance and advance women’s rights by mainstreaming gender in policy planning and budgeting. As a result, gender responsive budgeting has increasingly been recognized as an important tool for advancing de facto gender equality, support the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda and other global goals as well as contribute to the achievements of the commitments of the Western Balkans under the EU Gender Action Plan 2021 - 2025 in the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

To deepen the work previously done and to ensure the sustainability of the interventions on GRB, UN Women initiated a regional programme implemented in the Western Balkans with the participation of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Serbia “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 the implementation of existing national and international commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Western Balkans.

The programme supports transformative financing for gender equality (GE) towards more transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance, which requires national and local governments to mobilize and make effective use of financing sources and to enhance the capacities of right holders to demand accountability. The programme is structured around two outcomes:

Outcome 1: By 2024, national and local governments apply gender responsive budgeting to integrate gender equality principles in public financing processes

- Output 1.1: By 2024, Ministries of Finance, Line Ministries and National GE Machineries have knowledge and evidence to make informed budgetary allocation towards GE in line with national, and international commitments.
- Output 1.2: By 2024, local governments have the capacity to apply GRB tools in their plans and budget including post recovery of Covid-19
- Output 1.3: By 2024, government officials share knowledge and best practices across the region on GRB

Outcome 2: By 2024 public oversight bodies² CSOs, women including the disadvantaged, demand transparency and accountability of public policies and budgets to gender equality processes

- Output 2.1: By 2024, Parliament and oversight bodies have capacities to monitor and advocate for gender responsive policies and budgets

- Output 2.2: By 2024, Gender equality advocates are able to raise issues related to Financing for GE
- Output 2.3: By 2024, women, including the disadvantaged, are able to voice their needs and act as agents of change in planning and budgetary processes through media
- Output 2.4: Output 2.4 By 2024, GRB knowledge and best practices are compiled and available to oversight bodies

The programme includes activities focused on enhancing the institutionalization of GRB at the central level and local levels. In addition, the project is collaborating closely with the gender responsive budgeting (GRB) project in North Macedonia. The programme overall budget amounts 5,26 USD million including a cost extension until March 2025.

Programme management arrangements

The programme is managed by the programme implementation team in UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (UN Women ECA RO) led by the Regional GRB Programme Manager, under the overall supervision of the Regional Director for UN Women ECA RO based in Istanbul (Turkiye) with the support and strategic guidance of the Project Advisory Board. Implementation at country is led by UN Women offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia.

1.2. Key highlights on UN Women supported initiatives contributing to financing for gender equality in the ECA Region

In Albania, UN Women has provided support to national and local government institutions in strengthening democratic governance and advancing women's rights through initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender into policy planning and budgeting. Through these supports, the Government of Albania has made national and international commitments to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and has adopted sound policies and laws that integrate the principle of gender equality. At the local level, GRB has been a legal requirement in the Local Government Financial Management cycle since 2017 with UN Women's interventions. As all functions of central government are replicated at the local level as shared or delegated functions, municipalities in Albania are responsible for the implementation of all national and sectorial policies and strategies. After the introduction of programme and performance-based budgeting (PPB) in 2018, the Albanian Financial Management Information System (AFMIS) was established at the central level. AFMIS speeded up the process and improved the quality of budget documents in 2019. The new gender equality strategy 2021–2027 includes municipalities as one of the most important actors, among others, when it comes to tackling different aspects of gender inequality through the gender mainstreaming process within local budgets. UN Women Albania carried out capacity development activities and utilized innovative methods through media involving Albanian journalists and reporters, the first of its kind in Albania. Reporters were supported with technical expertise on how to use GRB as a tool to assess the impact of government budgets on women's lives and key elements in reporting on gender equality. A key focus was put also on the crucial role that media plays in monitoring and holding the government accountable for their budgets. Moreover, capacity development was provided to budget users on programme budgeting and GRB across sectors to develop more socially responsive policies and legislation, and to introduce gender objectives in key selected policy areas. To this extent, through the technical assistance provided, UN Women Albania increased the

capacities of more than 150 public officials of Albanian line ministries. The technical assistance was focused on providing capacity development of line ministries on performance budgeting and GRB across sectors as well as mentoring line ministries to introduce gender objectives and key performance indicators in key selected policy areas in the Medium-Term Budget Planning (MTBP). Targeted trainings were developed and delivered in cooperation with the Analysis and Programming Department at the General Directorate of Budget within the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE). The trainings were focused on the preliminary findings of the MoFE and UN Women of the first MTBP 2022-2024 phase and the recommendations for the improvement of the document in the second phase of 2022-2024 MTBP. Another example A Memorandum of Understanding between UN Women Albania and the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA) was signed in July 2021, in order to expand the cooperation in the area of GRB and gender mainstreaming. UN Women supports ASPA by providing training and technical expertise to raise the capacities of the public administration at local and central levels on planning and monitoring for the advancement of gender equality among other GRB initiatives in the country.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Having GRB as a key principle in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Gender Action Plan 2018–2022 was a major achievement and the country continues to respect this as one of its most important achievements. In 2020, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a detailed declaration on the development of GRB and this was included in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FbiH) Budget Framework Paper (2021–2023). The expected results of the project ‘Transformative Financing for Gender Equality: Towards more Transparent Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans’ will build on past achievements and ensure the allocation of an annual budget for gender equality. It will also ensure that budget programmes are mainstreamed, the capacity of government officials, media professionals and councillors on GRB improved and that related topics and policies and practices for implementing GRB are in place in local government. UN Women's efforts in implementing GRB mainly focused on training for government officials, integration into legal frameworks, development of budgeting software, and local community involvement among other initiatives. Since 2020, UN Women in BiH has been conducting GRB training programs for state and entity-level governments, involving various ministries of finance, line ministries, and agencies. Initially sector-specific, the training approach was broadened in 2021 to include these actors in combined sessions to facilitate more dynamic exchanges of information and initiatives, improving the training's overall effectiveness. These sessions aimed to deepen participants' understanding of gender-responsive approaches in budgeting, in line with the current legal framework and tools. Trainings included practical work where participants developed elements of gender-responsive budget programs, encouraging application within their institutions. Moreover, GRB related initiatives included a gender-sensitive criteria for grant disbursement and reporting in BiH institutions and the design of a new software program for budgeting in the Republic of Srpska includes a component for GRB, reflecting the integration of gender considerations into financial tools and processes. These initiatives are grounded in existing legal frameworks and draw upon good practices both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, UN Women has had involvement with CSOs in its GRB implementation efforts, for example, “Today for the Future” have played a significant role in gender-responsive participatory processes across various municipalities. In summary, UN Women's GRB initiatives in BiH represent various efforts, integrating training, legal framework development, software enhancements, and community participation to embed gender equality in budgeting processes at different levels of government and society.

In Serbia, GRB has been a part of the Budget System Law in Serbia since 2015 and institutions at all governmental levels are included in its implementation, while the entire process is governed by the

Ministry of Finance, Provincial Secretariat of Finance and the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, with the support of UN Women. The Budget System Law recognized the achievement of gender equality as one of its objectives and prescribed mandatory GRB implementation at all governmental levels, envisioned as a gradual process to be fully implemented by 2024. This legal obligation was further strengthened with the adoption of the new Law on Gender Equality in 2021, while the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030 recognizes GRB as a measure to establish a comprehensive and functional system for development and implementation of gender responsive public policies and budgets. Introduction of GRB into the budget software at provincial and national level also represents a major development. The Sida funded project ‘Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive, and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans’ aims to support Serbia in further GRB institutionalization and integrating gender perspective into every stage of local and national policy and budgetary processes. GRB initiatives cover various aspects, including its institutionalization through partnerships. 2024 as the deadline for full GRB application, the Budget System Law and Gender Equality Law (2021), emphasizing gender equality in budgeting and the gradual introduction of GRB. Other GRB initiatives include training, mentoring, and networking, and challenges like lack of capacity, data, and understanding of GRB. Octopus was also launched as a part of a program responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on supporting women in Mionica with services like rest, training, socialization, health, education, legal advisory, and community support. Some examples include piloting of GRB as a tool to improve the economic position of rural women and ensure that key challenges rural women face are addressed through targeted financing. As part of the initiative, UN Women together with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality organized consultations with representatives of 22 women’s CSOs, coming from 11 municipalities in Serbia, and 11 ministries and institutions, to discuss key issues that require a cross-sectoral approach and defined GRB objectives and indicators. Based on these consultations and desk review of relevant budgets and legal documents, UN Women produced a set of recommendations and indicators that would contribute to the closing of gender gap in the economic position of rural women, along with the information on needed resources to be allocated through the budget.

In Kosovo, UN Women previously worked on GRB in the context of the UNKT Joint Program on Domestic Violence implemented in the country, which main objective is to support to addressing Gender Based Violence in Kosovo through strengthening the Implementation of the Kosovo Law, National Action Plan and Strategy against Domestic Violence. Project was implemented by 5 UN Agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR and UNDP). UN Women role focused in contributing to the program through a specific GRB component by providing technical assistance on Gender Responsive Budgeting. Most recently, within the scope of the current project, UN Women's efforts in GRB initiatives in Kosovo have been comprehensive and participatory, focusing on both legal framework development and capacity building at local government levels. For example, in the first quarter of 2022, UN Women Kosovo completed the GRB concept document. This document, developed through a participatory approach rather than as a top-down initiative, offers a thorough evidence-based analysis and methodical application of regulatory impact assessment tools, including gender impact assessment. It outlines the content and structure of the draft normative act for GRB, proposing necessary amendments to the existing legal framework of Kosovo for full implementation. This work was led by the Agency for Gender Equality and the Ministry, highlighting its multi-institutional nature. UN Women also contributed to capacity development activities for parliamentarians, public administration personnel, budget analysts, and policymakers. More recently, UN Women partnered with 15 municipalities to support advancement of gender responsive budgeting.

In North Macedonia, in 2019, gender-specific provisions and guidelines for central budget users were included in the Government's Strategic Planning Methodology. The budget circular for local self-governments requires municipalities to allocate resources for gender equality. The Republic of North Macedonia made advancements in GRB in 2021 with the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021–2026) and the Organic Budget Law. The project 'Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets' aims to enhance women's lives and include vulnerable groups by integrating gender perspectives into national and local policymaking and budget processes. Several initiatives were carried out by UN Women in this context. For example, the State Audit Office (SAO) and UN Women signed a memorandum for enhancing SAO's capacity in gender-responsive policymaking and budgeting. The first gender performance audit focused on government measures for gender equality and gender budget initiatives. Training sessions for auditors on gender equality and GRB have been conducted, and support is provided to women's organizations for empowering women and influencing local decision-making. In 2021, local grassroots CSOs reached 2,286 women for capacity development and empowerment. Another GRB initiative example is the joint initiative of the UN Women "Gender Equality Facility (GEF)" project implemented by UN Women Office in North Macedonia, funded by Sweden, and UN Women's regional flagship programme "Making Every Woman and Girl Count" in Europe and Central Asia, in collaboration with the School of Data NGO, the bootcamp's unique approach combined traditional capacity-building with a datathon, where diverse change-makers channeled their experience and insights to co-create data-driven solutions to gender inequality. This has paved the way for the second phase of the Project, which aims to involve partnering with the network of gender data enthusiasts who successfully completed the bootcamp in 2023.

In Moldova, GRB was embedded for the second time into the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) for 2017-2021 as one of ten priority areas. The second NSGE for 2017-2021 and its associated Action Plan now articulates GRB as one of ten priority areas for the Country. In addition, the Strategy on the prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2018-2023) and its Action Plan for 2018-2020 has been developed taking gender-responsive budgeting perspective into account. The Strategy is based on the four-pillar approach of the Istanbul Convention and covers the areas of prevention, protection, punishment and integrated policies. UN Women as well as UNFPA contributed to the development of the Strategy and advocated for its adoption. UN Women contributed to the achievement of the objectives within this context via national consultants who provided expert support to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection and other public authorities. Between 2020-2023 UN Women work on GRB in Moldova mainly focused on enhancing knowledge and capacities in gender mainstreaming and GRB at the national and local levels and with the involvement of different stakeholders. UN Women's work involved but is not limited to supporting institutions with training and coaching for women civil servants, local councillors, and mayors, particularly those in their first mandates. Key activities included developing gender-sensitive policies and budgets, strengthening women's leadership in local public administration, and implementing community initiatives. Partnerships with various organizations facilitated these efforts, contributing to the institutionalization of GRB and promoting gender equality in governance and budgeting processes. More recently, drawing from the key findings of the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) and Gender PEFA reports and, the objectives outlined in the PFM Strategy 2023-2030, UN Women has been working to support the development of a gender-responsive Public Finance Management (PFM) system in Moldova.

In Georgia, UN Women contributed to a move towards a more inclusive and gender-responsive approach to budgeting at both the central and local levels in Georgia. At the central level, GRB has been integrated into Georgia's broader Public Financial Management (PFM) system reform. The Ministry of Finance (MoF), with support from the World Bank, conducted the first-ever gender-responsive PFM assessment in 2021 as part of Georgia's PEFA. This assessment laid the groundwork for incorporating GRB principles into the 2023–2026 PFM Strategy. Additionally, a government decree now mandates ministries to align their budget statements with gender equality objectives. To facilitate this, UN Women is developing a gender tracking and tagging methodology, with pilot programs in three key ministries. Moreover, training programs conducted by UN Women and the Academy of the Ministry of Finance have enhanced the GRB capacities of 381 public servants, promoting the understanding of the interplay between gender equality, public finance management, and good governance. At the local level, GRB efforts focus on empowering grassroots rural women through mobilization and advocacy for public fund allocation to community priorities. While Georgia lacks a formal legal and institutional framework for local-level GRB, UN Women's initiatives encourage participatory approaches, enabling women to influence local budgets. This has been bolstered by the recent creation of “general assemblies of the local settlement,” enhancing women's legal footing in discussions with local authorities on budgetary and governance issues.

In Belarus, GRB work started in March 2022 within Joint programme “Promoting new tools of sustainable development budgeting that prioritize vulnerable populations in Belarus” implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women supported by Joint SDG Fund. The main focus of interventions was on building commitment and capacity of the key stakeholders including Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (responsible for national indicator 5.c.1), Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Finance.

In Tajikistan, UN Women contributed to strengthening the national GRB through two projects: Financing SDGs in Tajikistan and Empowerment of the Families Left Behind for Improved Migration Outcomes in Khatlon, which were conducted through the development of the “Gender responsive budget analysis of pilot ministries programs and policies in Tajikistan” and signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Academy of Public Administration (APA) on mainstreaming gender equality and GRB. UN Women's work also included the support for establishing a Centre for capacity-building for talented women and women in decision-making and development and institutionalization of the training module for civil servants on GRB as well as capacity building on gender and financing SDGs of trainers, civil servants members of the workings groups under the National Development Council; and development of the “Practical guide on GRB implementation”; and vii) providing recommendations on piloting GRB. Through these results, UN Women became an established actor on GRB in Tajikistan and was included in the national working group (WG) on mainstreaming GRB and SDG marker. This WG at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) developed, with inputs from UN Women, the draft Law "On the State Budget of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2024" and instruction on the development of indicators for the State Budget 2023-2025. UN Women continuing implementation of GRB in 2023 in the frames of the Migration Programme with the engagement of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population (MoLMEP), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and national and district level actors. The project team and GRB experts will increase capacity of local partners to implement gender responsive policies, district action plans and allocated budgets. Moreover, UN Women conducted both online and offline training sessions for civil servants by inviting an international expert from the MoF of the Republic of Albania and GRB expert from the ECARO.

In Kazakhstan, UN Women's work involved in the initiative on gender-responsive budgeting integration in Kazakhstan, together with the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MNE RK).

The result of such cooperation was the development of an Action Plan for the Implementation of Gender Budgeting in Kazakhstan for the period 2020–2025, which identified specific measures to improve planning and budgeting procedures taking into account gender factors. As a result of the agreement of the Ministry of National Economy with the National Commission for Women and Family and Demographic Policy, it was decided to integrate the activities of this Plan into the general Action plan for the implementation of the Concept of family and gender policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 (the second stage). UN Women’s work focused on strengthening institutional capacity of central and local government bodies (Ministry of Education and Science and other local departments of education and science), members of the interagency working group on GRB under MNE RK and representatives of Parliament (Majilis) in gender responsive budgeting and gender analysis in order to establish a solid foundation for gender mainstreaming into government programmes, state policy and the state budget programmes. Aligned with this, UN Women project in Kazakhstan, entitled “Assistance to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and enforce commitments on gender equality promotion in Kazakhstan”, has worked to improve processes related to national planning and budgeting through gender mainstreaming in national policies, programs and strategies and to increase the capacity of national government, key ministries in gender mainstreaming in planning and budgeting system in the context of nationalization of SDGs. Within this initiative, online trainings for public officials and representatives of Parliament on gender responsive budgeting and analysis in national planning and budgeting system were conducted in 2021 and 2022. Capacity building interventions implemented within the framework of the joint project mainly focused on training of analytical skills and planning capabilities for the target group of civil servants who are duty bearers in public administration contributing to the strategic planning and budget system. This initiative also aimed to support the Government of Kazakhstan and Parliament in clear prioritization, planning, budgeting and implementation of its strategic plans, programmes and policy documents with principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In Türkiye, UN Women implemented its first GRB project in 2012-2015, with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the financial support of the Sabancı Foundation. The Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Ministry of Interior (MoI), as well as the UMT were the implementing partners. With UN Women’s advocacy efforts and technical support, some of the municipalities scaled up their gender equality commitments by reflecting them as gender equality goals, targets, and indicators in their local strategic plans. Some set up monitoring units to follow through on the commitments made in GRBs. This was a major achievement as in most cases there was no reference to gender in previous strategic plans and budgets. Gaziantep, Edirne, Eskişehir and Kocaeli, established new commissions with representatives from all main departments that are in charge of monitoring municipal services in terms of their support to gender equality. An in-depth assessment of the 2013-2015 GRB Training Program was carried out in May 2015, and the findings of this report heavily informed the design of this project. In 2016-2017, UN Women continued its cooperation with the EOC to increase parliamentarians’ and their experts’ awareness of GRB, within the framework of the “Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Türkiye Project” funded by Swedish SIDA. In June 2016, UN Women organized a GRB workshop to identify ways for the Parliament to continue to advocate for GRB. In 2017-2018, in line with TGNA’s request, UN Women is continued to support parliamentary capacity-building on GRB with trainings and the development of tools to utilize GRB within the parliament and public sector’s budgetary processes. More recently, in December 2020, UN Women began the European Union-funded three-year project Implementing Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting in Türkiye. Working with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services - General Directorate on the Status of Women and the Presidency of Türkiye - Presidency of Strategy and Budget (PSB), the project showcases how GRB can address persistent

gender inequalities to improve women's lives and foster gender-responsive development. Its goal is to integrate a gender perspective in all national and local policy-making and budgeting processes. It provides tailored technical assistance and guidance at local and national levels. The project targets selected line Ministries and four pilot municipalities (Edirne Municipality, Eskisehir Metropolitan Municipality, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality).

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND USE

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability of UN Women's work in the area of GRB and the evaluation findings will be used for strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability as well as for the generation of knowledge. While the focus of the evaluation will primarily be the regional programme (implemented in Albania, BiH, Serbia and Kosovo); the evaluation will also aim to draw lessons and best practices from the implementation of GRB initiatives supported by UN Women in the other countries mentioned above. The evaluation will be conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt.

The **objectives** of this evaluation are to:

1. Assess the **relevance, coherence** and **sustainability** of UN Women's contribution to financing for GEEW in the ECA region.
2. Assess **effectiveness and organizational efficiency** in progressing towards the achievement of GRB regional project results
3. Analyze how **human rights approach and gender equality principles** are integrated in the implementation of GRB programming.
4. **Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples and innovations** of work supported by UN Women in GRB programming.
5. Provide **actionable recommendations** with respect to UN Women's work on GRB in the ECA region.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of UN Women in all UN Women ECA offices and in the UN Women ECARO, the responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in the countries and territories where initiatives have been implemented, and the beneficiaries of the different interventions. The findings of the evaluation are expected to contribute to effective programming, organizational learning and accountability. It will also be a key input to knowledge management on gender responsive in ECA policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional level in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for developing sustainable interventions on gender responsive budgeting.

The evaluation should also provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered to inform future programming in this area in the countries where the regional programme is implemented and in other countries in the region. This would include interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact. It should also define recommendations to improve project management and maximize ownership by partners in the countries and territories of project implementation.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE, METHODOLOGY AND QUESTIONS

3.1. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will be conducted in the final stage of the implementation of the programme and will cover the period from June 2020 to June 2024. The evaluation is scheduled to be commissioned in the period March-September 2024. The evaluation includes data collection missions in all countries where the programme has been implemented, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. The evaluation shall cover all aspects of the programme, and broadly allocate resources (time) in relation to the relative expenditure between the various components of the programme.

In addition, the evaluation will analyse different initiatives implemented in the different countries in the region in the period 2020-2023. Remote consultations will take place in those countries and onsite data collection missions will only be conducted in the countries where the regional programme is implemented.

3.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant UN Women stakeholders and partners in the countries and territories of project implementation. The evaluation will adhere to gender and human rights principles and to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines².

The evaluation will represent a final regional programme evaluation and will also include an assessment of other GRB initiatives. It will have both: a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results will be employed. The evaluation methodology will furthermore follow, a ToC approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate.

Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents such as project and programme documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation;
- Semi-structured interviews focus group discussions, surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other stakeholders;
- Field visits and observation at selected programme sites.

² Please see Annex 1 Evaluation References below

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The methodology and approach will incorporate human rights and gender equality perspectives. The Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report.

3.3. Evaluation questions

Questions under OCDE/DAC evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence effectiveness, efficiency, human rights and gender equality and sustainability will be answered by the evaluation. During the inception phase of the evaluation, it is expected that the evaluation team will develop an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the questions below and refine them as needed, the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means for verification as a tool for the evaluation. The list of questions below is indicative and the final evaluation matrix will be validated by the evaluation task manager and the evaluation reference groups constituted in the framework of this evaluation process and approved in the evaluation inception report.

Relevance: the extent to which the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, countries' needs, global priorities, and partner's and donor's policies

- What approaches does UN Women deploy in GRB programming in the ECA region and what underlying assumptions and theories support these initiatives?
- How was the situation and needs analysis undertaken for the GRB interventions?
- How were women's priorities identified in the context of the regional programme and other programmatic initiatives supported in the region?

Human Rights and Gender Equality

- To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the programme design and implementation?
- To what extent is the GRB programming in the region bringing about gender transformative changes that address the root causes of gender inequalities – including prevailing social norms, attitudes and behaviours, discrimination and social systems and including inequalities experienced by groups in vulnerable situations?

Coherence: the extent to which the interventions are achieving internal synergies within the organization and external synergies with the work of other key partners

- To what extent the programmatic initiatives adhere to corporate strategic priorities of UN Women?
- Are the regional programme and other programmatic initiatives achieving synergies between the larger UN Women's portfolio and the work of the UN Country Teams in the different countries?
- Is the programme achieving synergies between UN Women and national and local government counterparts?

- In the context of the regional programme, to what extent the programme adhered to government's priorities government priorities and the participating countries' reform processes related to GRB?
- Are the regional programme and other programmatic initiatives achieving synergies between UN Women and CSOs in the different countries?
- To what extent UN Women possesses a comparative advantage in the programme's area of work in comparison with other UN entities and relevant stakeholders in ECA region?

Effectiveness: the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

- What evidence exists to support claims that UN Women's GRB portfolio in ECA is contributing to gender equality and making an impact on the advancement of women's rights?
- How do the political, economic, social and institutional contexts affect UN Women's GRB work and the achievement of expected results?
- What key indicators, processes and variables are strategic for tracking and measuring progress in GRB processes?
- To what extent has the regional programme been successful in positioning the GRB work within broader national planning, budgeting, and monitoring frameworks (PRSP, budget reform, public sector reform, decentralization)?
- What are the results of the regional programme? What are the good practices, lessons learned and challenges?

Efficiency– extent to which the initiative has used the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results.

- To what extent were resources managed by the regional programme in a transparent and accountable manner (at all levels) to promote equitable and sustainable development?
- Have UN Women's organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the programme?
- What measures have been taken during planning and implementation of the regional programme to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
- Have the regional programme outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent has the regional programme management structure facilitated (or hindered) good results and efficient delivery?

Sustainability: the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed, the probability of continued long-term benefits and the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

- To what extent have GRB initiatives been successful in embedding the participation of civil society and women's organizations in the entire budgetary cycle?

- To what extent have the GRB initiatives been successful in making the linkages and agreements that would ensure the continuation of work on GRB? What factors are/will be critical to sustainability?
- In the context of the regional programme, what evidence is there that achievements will be sustained? And what specific activities do government, civil society organizations, or others indicate they will continue regardless of whether UN Women support continues?

4. EVALUATION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

4.1 Evaluation governance structure

The evaluation process will be led by UN Women Independent Evaluation Service and the management structure for this evaluation will include:

1. ECA Regional Evaluation Specialist (RES), who is a member of the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office, will be the evaluation team leader and the task manager for this evaluation;
2. Internal Reference Group for administrative support and accountability will include: UN Women Regional Office Deputy Director and the Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans regional programme manager and the ECA Regional Evaluation Specialist (who will lead the group);
3. External Evaluation Reference Group to foster stakeholders' ownership and participatory approach; CSOs, state partners; development partners (including donors); representative of the UNCT.
4. Internal Evaluation Reference Group integrated by designated personnel from all offices where GRB initiatives are being considered for this evaluation. CO personnel are expected to be closely engaged during the entire evaluation process; personnel will be consulted during the inception and data collection phases of the evaluation.
5. IEAS management will provide oversight and quality assurance to the process and an IES staff member will be assigned as a peer reviewer for this evaluation process.

4.2 Phases of the evaluation process

The evaluation process has five phases:

1) Preparation: gathering and analysing programme data, conceptualizing the evaluation approach, internal consultations on the approach, preparing the TOR, establishment of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), stakeholders mapping and selection of evaluation team.

2) Inception: consultations between the evaluation team and the EMG, programme portfolio review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with the ERG, review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative, finalization of evaluation methodology and preparation and validation of inception report.

3) Data collection and analysis: in-depth desk research, in-depth review of the programme documents and monitoring frameworks, in-depth online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits.

4) Analysis, validation and synthesis stage: analysis of data and interpretation of findings and drafting and validation of an evaluation report and other communication products.

5) Dissemination and follow-up: once the evaluation is completed UN Women is responsible for the development of a Management Response to evaluation recommendations within 6 weeks after the final approval of the evaluation report, publishing the evaluation report, uploading the final evaluation report on the UN Women GATE website and the dissemination of evaluation findings amongst key stakeholders.

5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

5.1 Evaluation deliverables

The evaluation team is responsible for the following deliverables:

- **An inception report**: The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the evaluation reference group for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report.
- **Presentation of preliminary findings**: A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the evaluation management group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the reference group for comment and validation. The evaluation team will incorporate the feedback received into the draft report.
- **A draft evaluation report**: A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate evaluation management group feedback and will be shared with the evaluation reference group for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the reference group for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts.
- **The final evaluation report**: The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report.
- **Evaluation communication products**: A PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations.
- **Evaluation dissemination plan**: to be developed by team lead and programme team to ensure great use of the evaluation process.

Regarding the validation process of all products, those will be shared with the evaluation reference groups for feedback and validation. The different evaluation deliverables will be revised and cleared by UN Women IIEAS management. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received

and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report. Final evaluation report will be approved and issued by UN Women IEAS management.

5.2. Evaluation timeframe

Activity	Product to be delivered by Evaluation Team	General Timeframe
Inception phase of evaluation/RO data collection		June-July 2024
Inception report (including two rounds of revision)	The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the IEAS leadership and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the internal and external reference groups for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report.	July-August 2024
Data collection phase of evaluation		September-October 2024
Field visits	Field visits in the 4 countries covered by the regional programme will be conducted. The findings from the field visits will be integrated in the synthesis report.	2 field missions are expected to be conducted in September and 2 field missions are expected to be conducted in October
Analysis and reporting phase		October-November 2024
Presentation of preliminary findings	A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be delivered to the management and reference	October 2024

(one round of revision)	groups for comment and validation. The evaluation team will incorporate the feedback received into the draft report.	
Draft Report (including three rounds of revision prior to the final report)	A first draft report will be shared with the IEAS leadership and the internal reference group. The second draft report will incorporate internal feedback and will be shared with the external reference group for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the reference group for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts.	November 2024
Final Report	The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report.	December 2024

6. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND REQUIREMENTS

The UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist for Europe and Central Asia will act as the Team Leader for the evaluation. The team leader will be supported by a team consisting of be the main responsible person for the satisfactory delivery of all the deliverables listed above. The team leader will be responsible for overall coordination of the production of deliverables during all phases of the evaluation process, ensuring the quality of outputs and application of methodology as well as timely delivery of all evaluation products in close collaboration with the evaluation management group.

An evaluation team will be comprised of the UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist for Europe and Central Asia acting as the evaluation Team Leader, an international evaluation specialist, a GRB expert, a research assistant, and 2 local consultants (to cover Albania and Kosovo and Serbia and BiH, respectively) who will support all substantive aspects of the evaluation. The team leader, is responsible for overall coordination of the production of deliverables during all phases of the evaluation process, ensuring the quality of outputs and application of methodology as well as timely delivery of all evaluation products in close collaboration with the evaluation team and the management group. The team leader is expected to lead the first data collection mission in a country -yet to be determined-. Following the first data collection mission either the team leader or the international evaluation specialist will participate and lead all field missions in the rest of the countries to be supported by local consultants.

Duties and responsibilities of the international consultant are as follows:

Duties and responsibilities of the team leader

- Leading the inception phase and developing an inception report outlining design, approach and methodology of the evaluation and an the workplan of the evaluation team
- Directing and supervising the work of the evaluation team in carrying out collection, research and analysis of relevant documentation and other data, and reporting
- Overseeing and assuring quality of data collection and the analysis of the evaluation evidence
- Preparing for meetings with the reference groups and other stakeholders
- Leading the preparation of the draft and final evaluation reports and evaluation communication products

Duties and responsibilities of the international evaluation consultant:

- Provide overall support and work under the overall leadership and guidance of the evaluation team leader
- Supporting evaluation preparatory phase including synthesizing information for the inception report
- Leading data collection missions in selected locations (up to 3 missions)
- In coordination with the team leader, lead the preparation of all evaluation deliverables, including the analyses and synthesis of evaluation evidence and reports drafting
- Lead the preparation of evaluation communication products

Duties and responsibilities of the national consultant are as follows:

- Supporting inception phase gathering documents, following up with UN Women offices in the countries of programme's implementation and synthesizing relevant information;
- Assisting in the preparation of the missions with UN Women offices as relevant;
- Participating in country data collection missions;
- Conduct interviews and collect additional data as needed;
- Attending and supporting the preparation of all meetings and presentations;
- Supporting the analysis of the evidence at country level.

Qualifications and requirements of the international evaluation consultant:

- At least a master's degree in social sciences, economics, international relations, gender studies or a relevant social science related area;
- 7 years of relevant experience of periodically conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects;
- Proven experience of designing and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights-based evaluations utilising participatory approaches and methodologies;
- Knowledge and experience in gender equality and women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming and gender analysis;
- Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Ability to produce well-written analytical reports;

- Previous experience working in the Western Balkans will be considered an asset;
- Experience with the United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Proficiency in English
- Knowledge of any of the languages of the countries involve in this evaluation will be considered an asset.

Qualification and requirements of the international GRB Expert:

- At least a master's degree in social sciences, economics, international relations, gender studies or a relevant social science related area;
- Over 10 years of relevant experience of work in the area of GRB
- Previous experience participating in gender-responsive and human rights-based evaluations utilising participatory approaches and methodologies will be considered a strong asset;
- Experience with the United Nations system is an asset;
- Proficiency in English

Qualifications and required expertise of local consultants:

- At least a master's degree related to one or more of the following: economics, social sciences, development studies, gender studies or a related area;
- 5 years of relevant experience in the area of gender-based discrimination and ending violence against women;
- Knowledge and experience of gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches to evaluation;
- Experience of conducting gender-responsive evaluations and/or applied research utilizing a wide range of approaches and methods;
- Ability to produce well written reports;
- Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Experience within the United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Proficiency in local language(s) and English.

Competencies and core values for international and local consultants:

- Strong analytical, writing and reporting abilities;
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to lead a team and negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Commitment to quality products and deadlines;
- Builds strong relationships;
- Focuses on impact and results and responds positively to feedback;
- Approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates/safeguards ethics and integrity;
- Demonstrated corporate knowledge and sound judgment;
- Acts as a team player and facilitates team work;
- Facilitates and encourages open communication in the team, communicating effectively;
- Learns and shares knowledge and encourages learning of others;
- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling UN values and ethical standards;

- Demonstrates professional competence and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments; observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Displays cultural, gender, nationality, religion and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Please visit this link for more information on UN Women's Core Values and Competencies:
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/About%20Us/Employment/UN-Women-values-and-competencies-framework-en.pdf>

Annex 1 Relevant evaluation references

Strategic plan of UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/un-women-strategic-plan-2022-2025>

Evaluation Policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW/2012/8): www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=UNW/2012/12&Lang=E

Evaluation of the programme “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe” in Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, FYR Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova
<http://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=4733>

Evaluation of the second phase of the programme “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe” in Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, FYR Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova
<http://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?EvaluationId=5013>

Final Evaluation of the Phase III of the Regional Programme Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe 2017-2019 <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11388>

How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation. Evaluation Handbook: www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation

UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS):
www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/evaluation/evaluation-geraasmethodology-en.pdf

United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System:
<https://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>

Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance:
www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation:
www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

UNEG Ethical Guidelines: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

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