



PROMOTING GENDER RESPONSIVE POLICIES
AND BUDGETS: TOWARDS TRANSPARENT,
INCLUSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE IN
THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA (2018-2022)

FINAL EVALUATION

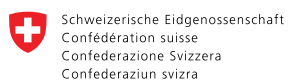


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Title
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEO	Department for Equal Opportunities
EC	European Commission
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ET	Evaluation team
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Gender Equality
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HDI	Human Development Index
HR	Human Rights
IC	Istanbul Convention
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFI	International financial institutions
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
LSG	Local Self-Government
LSGU	Local Self-Government Units
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MoAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy

MoF	Ministry of Finance
MP	Member of Parliament
MSR	Multi-sectoral response
NAP	National Action Plan
NEET	Neither in Employment Education or Training
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD DAC	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAB	Project Advisory Board
PFMR	Public Finance Management Reform
SAO	State Audit Office
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
SSO	State Statistical Office
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN PSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN Women ECA RO	UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
ZELS	Association of local self-government units

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report presents the main findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation of the four-year project “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia” (2018-2022) (henceforth the Project), implemented by UN Women Programme Office in North Macedonia with financial support by Switzerland and Sweden. The project supports Government stakeholders at central and local level on the implementation of gender responsive budgeting, and the civil society organizations and oversight bodies on strengthening the accountability towards gender equality commitments.

Project background: For more than one decade, Republic of North Macedonia has invested significant efforts to promote gender equality. The Gender Mainstreaming (GM) and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) are seen as key instruments for such processes. To understand the relevance, but also opportunities and challenges for successful introduction and implementation of GRB and achievement of project results, it is important to gain insight into the normative, institutional and policy framework in Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the situation along the key aspect of gender equality which defines the needs for intervention through both GM and GRB.

Project description: The Project was implemented from 1st October 2018 until 30th September 2022, with Extended Donor Agreement with SDC until 31st March 2023, and cost Extended Donor Agreement with SIDA until 30th September 2023 for SEK 2,500,000. The project is financed by Sweden with the total amount (including cost extension) of SEK 16,700,000 and by Switzerland with the amount of USD 1,998,602. The project has been implemented at central and local level, including 31 local communities: Kochani, Strumica, Bitloa, Gostivar, Tetovo, Sveti Nikole, Bogovinje, Novaci, Bogdanci, Mavrovo-Rostushe, Kriva Palanka, Ohrid, Stip, Skopje-Centar, Kisela Voda, Gazi Baba, Aerodrom, Gjorce Petrov, Kumanovo, Veles, Gevgelija, Staro Nagorichane, Karpos, Makedonska Kamenica, Delcevo, Struga, Vinica, Caska, Makedonski Brod, Kavadarci and the city of Skopje.

The target groups of the project include: Budget and finance unit of the Ministry of Finance, finance units of central and local level budget users, civil servants in selected line ministries and local self-government units, gender machinery in the country which includes

at central level department for Equal Opportunities, line ministries’ coordinators for equal opportunities and municipal coordinators for equal opportunities, Members of parliaments and local councillors in 31 targeted municipality. Civil society organizations (CSOs) of different types were important project beneficiaries, including grass-root and local women’s organizations, watchdog organizations, experienced advocacy and activist organizations. It was planned to support at least 60 CSOs initiatives. Local women mobilized through the project activities as agents of change were ultimate beneficiaries, including women from vulnerable social groups (rural, minorities, socially excluded, etc.). It was planned to reach over 4,000 of these women.

The overall goal of the Project is to improve women’s lives and support the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups through integration of gender perspective at all stages of national and local policy-making and budgeting processes.

The project plan is to achieve **two outcomes**:

1. The Government’s public finance management and the strategic planning processes respond to the different needs of women and men through effective application of gender responsive budgeting
2. Civil society organizations, women, including the most vulnerable, actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and benefit from public policies and budgets.

Approach and Methodology: The evaluation was conducted by two independent evaluators and was completed between May and October 2022. Evaluation purpose was to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the intervention from the point of view of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability, as well as alignment with human rights (HR) and ‘Leave No One Behind’ (LNOB) principles. The findings of the evaluation should contribute to organizational learning, future decision-making and effective programming and accountability. The findings of the evaluation will be used by UN Women and its partners for future engagement in the promotion of gender sensitive policy and budget planning at national and local levels.

The evaluation used theory based and contribution analysis approach, aiming to describe how the project was implemented and created a desired change, explaining the causalities between resources, activities, short and long-term outcomes. OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)¹ were used to summarize information and capture results achieved at outcome and output levels. Based on the evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations for future engagement of UN Women in this area were produced.

The methodology employed mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (documentation review, semi-structured interviews and standardized questionnaires) and analytical approaches to understand complexity of the processes and structures and gender relations in them. Gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) and human rights were integrated in the approach, including evaluation criteria and questions, and in generation of findings, conclusions and recommendations. Over 80 key informants (89% of women) were interviewed and more than 70 key documents, including project documentation, research, analyses and legal and policy documents were reviewed.

The evaluation adhered to UN Women and UN Evaluation Group standards and policies. Conclusions and recommendations are based on gender related data and gender analysis. Evaluation took into account UN commitment on disability inclusion and covered disability through evaluation questions.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance: The project was undoubtedly relevant and remains relevant as important part of the broader public finance management reform, national priorities related to the advancement of gender equality and empowerment of women and national obligations related to GEEW stemming from important international conventions, such as CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, Istanbul Convention and others. The project is relevant from the perspective of the needs of various stakeholders which were included as project partners or beneficiaries, responding to their needs: national and local governments and budget users institutions which needed to adjust to new responsibilities, methods and procedures, their employees, who needed new competences, knowledge and skills to be able to perform work in line with GRB, CSOs which needed support to mobilize as watch-

dogs of the budget processes or mobilizers of local women and the final beneficiaries – local women whose needs should be placed at the centre of policy planning and budgeting processes, but not as passive recipients but active citizens requesting measures in line with their authentic needs. The target groups were included adequately in the project design, whether directly through targeted consultations, or indirectly through previous work and cooperation, which informed the project team about their needs in regard to GRB. The project remains to be relevant, as with delayed adoption of the Organic Budget Law, there is a need to further develop the system through bylaws and support processes of the development of GRB to the full scale, enabling stakeholders to effectively participate in their respective roles within the new system.

Coherence: The project was fully aligned with UN Women strategic priorities, other national and regional UN Women initiatives related to the GEEW in the area of gender responsive public policies and budgets. The project manifested the unique expertise and comparative advantage of UN Women vis-à-vis other international and bilateral stakeholders engaged in the promotion of gender equality and public policy and finance reforms. It is complementary with other interventions implemented by International Financial Organizations (IFOs) in regard to the public finance management reform (PFMR), as well as initiatives by other international organizations focused on political empowerment of women and strengthening gender equality mechanisms and policies at national and local levels.

Effectiveness: The project was effectively implemented, results achieved to the greatest extent and processes were advanced in many ways, particularly in regard to awareness of GRB importance, skills and motivation of various stakeholders to apply GRB practices in their work, mobilization of women to request local policies and measures in line with their needs, capacities and mobilization of civil society to promote and safeguard GRB processes. The effectiveness of the implementation was to a large extent enabled by a combination of adequate strategies. The project employed diverse strategies targeting in appropriate way different stakeholders who participate in the GRB processes directly or indirectly in order to foster the introduction and implementation of GRB at different levels from 'all sides'. Providing tools for GM and GRB, capacity building for GRB, mobilization and coordination of women to be able to articulate their interest and lobby for their needs in LSGs, monitoring local budgeting processes, mutual learning and exchange of experience, appeared as successful project strategies. Factors that contributed to the project effectiveness are alignment with national priorities and increased willingness of stakeholders to learn and contribute

¹ OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

to GM and GRB, high expertise in GM and GRB of UN Women as well as experts they engaged who provided strong support to stakeholders, effective and innovative strategies and approaches, partnerships and presence of highly motivated stakeholders. However, delayed adoption of Organic Budget Law and respective bylaws made the achievement of results more challenging. Thus the hindering factors are mainly related to the delayed legal reform, political instability, and high turnover in ministries and LSGs, weak capacities of local GE mechanisms, lack of funds and very low capacities for implementation of programs in some municipalities, lack of gender disaggregated data and still overly prevailing gender stereotypes, and COVID-19 related restrictions.

Efficiency: The project was efficiently implemented with strategic allocation of financial resources to achieve planned results, with effective management and leadership of the project and efficient and reflexive monitoring system.

Impact: Although it is too early to estimate full impact of the project, the evidence points to important achievements that will eventually lead to the full-scale impact in terms of establishing the system of gender responsive policy and budget planning at central and local level from which women benefit, thus contributing to the promotion of gender equality. The impact is visible at policy, institutional, community and individual level. It manifests as established foundation for GRB (legal, human resource and procedural), new institutional forms and practices, new dynamic in local decision making between women and LSGs and visible gains that women achieved in terms of infrastructure projects, new or improved services as result of local planning more aligned with women's needs. The project has visible impact on women from various vulnerable groups, such as rural women, women from underdeveloped and remote communities, economically deprived women, and Roma women. The project applied intersectional approach having LNOB as a central principle, but disability inclusion per se was not a specific objective.

The project's activities were not designed to reflect specific interventions for systemic inclusion of women with disability and lacked resources available to specifically and systematically engage in it. The LSGUs supported within the project addressed

disability inclusion, specifically targeting the needs of people with disabilities which is a direct result of applying gender responsive budgeting within their programme planning processes. (e.g., budgeted measures for children with disability).

Sustainability: The project has successfully built capacities of rightsholders and duty bearers. However, the sustainability of these newly gained capacities will depend on the turnover of public administration staff, capacities of institutions to transfer knowledge and procedures to new staff. It will also depend on the capacities of NGOs to perform their watchdog role and readiness of women to continue to play active role in local budgeting and policy planning processes. Despite the increased awareness of GRB, newly developed skills and available tools, the ownership of national stakeholders (government) is not yet fully established. The project was implemented using replication methods which proved as successful in transferring knowledge and practices in targeted municipalities, and its potential for further replication provides a good ground for sustainability as remaining municipalities can be reached through future interventions. The upscaling was visible in integrating GRB competences and practices at the level of the national system for policy and budget planning, but with the need to further support the processes until the system is fully developed and reached certain routine in implementation.

Gender Equality and Human Rights: Gender and human rights principles and strategies are in the core of the GRB Project, which is reflected in the initial conceptualization and design of the Project all the way through its implementation, monitoring and reporting, and specifically taking into account the needs and rights of various groups of vulnerable women (particularly rural), along with paying respect to the highest human rights standards. The Project follows the UN Women strategic commitments to fully dedicate to mainstreaming disability inclusion throughout its work. However, the nature of the project and its scope, funding and management arrangements are not affording for specific interventions for systematic inclusion of women with disability in activities. The LSGUs supported within the project addressed disability inclusion, specifically targeting the needs of people with disabilities which is a direct result of applying gender responsive budgeting within their programme planning processes. (e.g. budgeted measures for children with disability).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: The project was and remains to be highly relevant for the advancement of gender equality but also for the reform of public finance management in North Macedonia.

Conclusion 2: The project demonstrates high coherence with UN Women strategy to advance gender equality in North Macedonia, with UNCT cooperation framework in the country, and with several important initiatives of other international organizations, particularly those focused on strengthening political participation of women, public finance management reform, and good governance at local and national levels. Closer cooperation with these complementary initiatives could bring more synergy in future for more effective implementation of GRB.

Conclusion 3: The project was effectively implemented, achieving and exceeding planned results mainly due to the invested expertise and high motivation and commitments of stakeholders stimulated by the project team and implementing partners, in the absence of formal legal obligations.

Conclusion 4: The project was efficiently implemented, with proper allocation of resources to achieve planned results, good management and coordination, as well as monitoring practices. The modes of coordination and cooperation that the UN Women project team employed have beneficial effect on partnering governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, enhancing their capacities to design, implement and manage projects.

Conclusion 5: Although it is still early to estimate the project impact in its full scale, the processes leading towards desired impact are visible and will likely lead to the planned outcomes. The evidence points to the impact on the system level, both central and local, as a new system of policy and budget planning is emerging and is visible across all policy sectors, even if not in the full form. The impact is visible at the level of participating institutions and their employees, of applying new methods, procedures, along with new awareness and competences. The impact is visible on CSOs and activists as they understand better budgeting processes and have the opportunity to engage in these processes whether as watchdogs or as mobilizing, advocacy and lobbying forces. Impact is visible at the community level, new projects financed from budgets are centred around women's needs, and finally, the impact is visible at individual level, as empowered and aware women request budget allocations in line with their needs, but also among other stakeholders as competences are developed at the individual level, as well as among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Conclusion 6: With adoption of the Organic Budget Law at the end of the project cycle, likelihood of sustainability of the project results will highly be increased as all benefits achieved by the project (such as new awareness, skills for GRB, methodologies, procedures, results, mobilization and active integration of civil society, academia in the process) now can be more firmly integrated or linked with the formal system of GRB (set of institutions, rules, procedures and practices).

Conclusion 7: The project was fully aligned with human rights and gender equality principles, respecting also the 'Leave No One Behind' principle.

LESSONS LEARNED

Persistent efforts in providing entry points in mainstreaming gender perspectives into the whole process of PFM reform through integrating gender perspective into performance and program-based budgeting proved worthwhile within the steady progress in transitioning towards that end.

1. Continued and systematic capacity development of public administration has been critical in addressing the institutional changes and turnover caused during elections.
2. The Resource Centre on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting as a knowledge hub proved as a good approach in capacity development that can be further profiled as a place for deepening specific knowledge on GRB, in particular sectoral or intersectional areas.
3. Enabling space and a conducive environment for effective participation of women's civil society organizations contributes to the effectiveness of introduction and implementation of GRB in local communities.
4. Supporting local self-governments to budget and implement measures for economic empowerment of women is critical in reducing the inequalities and redressing gender gaps on the labour market.
5. Experience in implementing gender budgeting up to now has shown the enduring need for empowerment of the vulnerable groups of women, particularly those experiencing intersectional disadvantages and related inequalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General recommendation is to continue with the project as clearly GRB institutionalization in North Macedonia is at a turning point. There is finally a legal ground for instituting the GRB in planning and financing policies and measures, but further operationalization of legal framework and different forms of support directed towards diverse stakeholders will be needed in order to ensure that the system is fully in place. Employees in the respective institutions need to reach certain routine in its implementation and monitoring, while civil society watchdogs need further support for monitoring budget implementation and advocating its revision, if needed. The following recommendations point to more specific areas of future needed interventions in this regard.

Recommendation 1: Contribute with expertise and other means to further developments of normative framework for systematic implementation of GRB, and at all levels in line with PFM reform. Possible actions:

- Expert support in future development of bylaws through which Organic Budget Law will be operationalized and implemented;
- Support efforts to integrate gender tagging of budget programmes in line with 5.c.1 indicator
- Adjust or develop new protocols, manuals, or other tools for implementation of GRB
- Consolidate and/or promote further repositories of relevant documents

Recommendation 2: Enhance existing and develop new partnerships and alliances in order to contribute to the synergy in various efforts to effectively implement GRB and direct financial flows to the GEEW priorities in line with authentic needs of women. Possible actions:

- Expand the pool of available resources for GEEW, and GRB, by further exploration of innovative approaches and expansion of the partnerships with external development partners
- Initiate and participate regional exchange on GRB achievements, challenges and good practices
- Build on good practice of partnership between academia and government and promote similar models for other areas of GEEW
- Introduce more exchange of information between local and national governments on GRB.

Recommendation 3: Support further stakeholders in their capacities to implement fully GRB at national and local level by providing expertise and adequate resources. Possible actions:

- Support work of Resource centre on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting in part-

nership with Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, focusing on systematization of positions responsible for work of Resource centre

- Expand the outreach of trainings delivered by Resource centre
- Continue and expand training of trainers for local self-governments, as well as mentoring support to local self-government units
- Maintain close cooperation and partnership with ZELS to expand capacity building activities to all LSGUs.
- Seek assistance and cooperation with the State Statistics Office for improving the availability of gender disaggregated data
- Further increase capacities of MPs for overseeing the implementation of gender equality legislation

Recommendation 4: Maintain and expand processes which are not fully sustainable at this point without further support and are crucial for the needs based and transparent GRB processes, particularly mobilization and coordination of local women and their engagement with local budget planning and execution, as well as budget watchdog initiatives which still need expert support and guidance. Possible actions:

- In the outreach and mobilization of local women enhance the focus on women economic empowerment through advocacy and lobbying for WEE programs in planning local policies and budgets.
- Support cooperation between CSOs and LSGUs in developing local economic empowerment programmes for women.
- Increase networking of women and exchange of experience and mutual learning across municipalities. Some joint initiatives by women could be also organized across municipalities.

Recommendation 5: Continue to take care of LNOB expanding outreach to more diverse groups of vulnerable women, increasing importance of disability inclusion in the implementation of outreach activities. Possible actions:

- In addition to the generalized outreach and mobilization of women in local communities, reserve some resources for more specific initiatives targeting specific vulnerable women, such as women living with disabilities, Roma women, single mothers, or similar.
- Include basic disability inclusion requirements in calls for proposals for implementing partners with the aim to pay more attention to this aspect in their project design and implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Report presents main findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation of the four-year project “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia” (2018-2022) (henceforth the Project), implemented by UN Women Programme Office in North Macedonia with financial support by Switzerland and Sweden. The project supports Government stakeholders at central and local level on the implementation of gender responsive budgeting, and the civil society organizations and oversight bodies on strengthening the accountability towards gender equality commitments.

The project builds on previous achievements and lessons learned, and represents logical continuation of multi-year regional projects of UN Women, in particular (1) Gender Responsive Budgeting in South East Europe: Advancing Gender Equality and Democratic Governance through Increased Transparency and Accountability (2006-2009), covering North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, (2) Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe (2011-2013), covering North Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; (3) Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe and the Republic of Moldova Regional Program (2017-2019), covering North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova. These continued efforts of UN Women, at regional and national level, led to accumulation of technical expertise on gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW), and more specifically in Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) and building pool of experts in this area.

1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

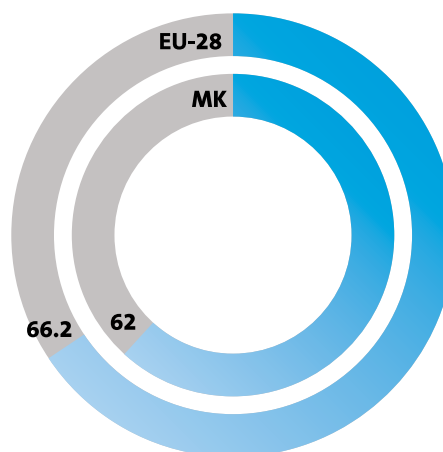
For more than one decade, Republic of North Macedonia has invested significant efforts to promote gender equality. The Gender Mainstreaming (GM) and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) are seen as key instruments for such processes. To understand the relevance, but also opportunities and challenges for successful introduction and implementation of GRB and achievement of project results it is important to get insights in the normative, institutional and policy framework in Republic of North Macedonia, as well as situation along the key aspect of gender equality which defines the needs for intervention including through GM and GRB.

1.1.1 GENDER EQUALITY SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Despite the efforts to promote gender equality in North Macedonia, there are still prominent gender inequalities across different areas of public and private life. Measured by the EIGE’s Gender Equality Index, which represents main tool for monitoring gender equality in EU and candidate countries, North Macedonia scores 62 points out of maximum 100 points indicating still long way remaining to full gender equality. The Index value for North Macedonia is lower than EU average for four points and it is higher than in other countries in the region (60.4 in Albania², 58 in Serbia³ and 55 in Montenegro⁴). Compared to EU, North Macedonia is lagging in all domains, except in the domain of Power. The biggest gap, compared to the EU average was found in the domains of Time and Money,⁵ indicating still strong ‘private patriarchy’.

FIGURE 1:
GENDER EQUALITY INDEX 2019

Source: UN Women, Gender Equality Index for North Macedonia



2019: Measuring Gender Equality

- https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2019/Gender%20Index_ENG.pdf
- <https://serbia.un.org/en/155849-gender-equality-index-republic-serbia-2021-digitalization-future-work-and-gender-equality>
- https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/events-files/gender_equality_index_2019_report_final.pdf
- Domain of time includes indicators that measure time spent in care activities and unpaid household work, while domain of Money includes indicators measuring income inequalities and poverty risks.

Data from other sources confirm this picture on systematic gender inequalities across different domains of public and private life.

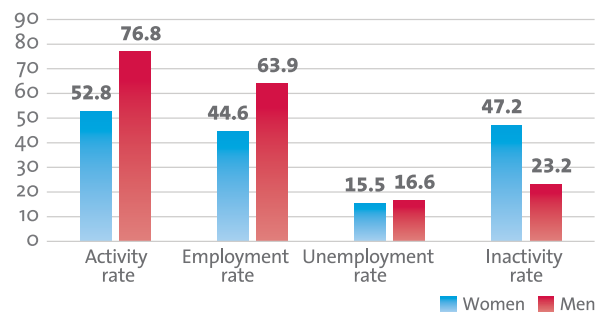
Women are underrepresented in the political power positions, and they do not influence equally as men policies, laws, reforms that shape socio-economic development. Due to legal quota system women are represented better in legislative than executive branch of power. Currently women participate among MPs in Parliament with 41.7%⁶ (which is among highest parliamentary representation of women in Europe), while among ministers their share is only 19%.⁷ Among 81 mayors there are only two women (2.47%).⁸

Data on **access to education** and educational achievement indicate increased participation of girls at all levels of education and even shifting of gender gaps in favour of girls. Although their participation in the university education is higher than among young men, there is still present remarkable segregation according to study areas, with girls concentrating more in social sciences, humanities and arts and their low participation in sciences, engineering, and ICT areas.⁹ This segregation is later on transferred to the labour market.

Gender inequalities are very prominent in the sphere of economic participation, paid and unpaid work. Labour Force Survey data indicate continuously big gender gaps in activity¹⁰ and employment.¹¹ As next figure reveals, women have much lower activity and employment rates and much higher inactivity than men.

Gender inequalities in paid work are also manifested as gender segregation across industries and occupations with women concentrating in lower paid sectors of social and personal services, and in occupations related to care economy, hospitality, and trade. Gender pay gap and ‘glass ceiling’ which reveals still present discrimination in promotion of women to management positions are also manifestations of gender gaps on the labour market.

FIGURE 2:
BASIC LABOR MARKET INDICATORS BY SEX, Q4/2020, %



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey¹²

Particularly unfavourable is position of rural women, and particularly those who are employed in agriculture on family farms. In Q2 of 2020 there were 37,000 women employed in agriculture (38.4% of total employment in agriculture).¹³ Employment in agriculture participated in total employment of women with 11.6%. Compared to men, women were far more likely to work as contributing family workers in agriculture, which reveals their vulnerability and the low quality of their employment in this sector.

The significant gender gap in labour market participation is at odds with women’s representation in the working-age population and their educational attainment, especially among cohorts younger than 40, of whom 25 percent of women and only 17 percent of men have post-secondary education. A slow school-to-work transition, full-time household activities, and the cultural norms of certain ethnic groups drive their inactivity, which undermines North Macedonia’s growth and developmental potential. In effect, labour market gender inequalities cost North Macedonia an estimated 16 percent in GDP per capita every year.¹⁴

Lower economic participation of women is to a great extent consequence of **disproportionate responsibilities women carry in regard to the informal care**. Household work, childcare and care for other family members who are in need of the support of others (persons with disabilities, older, sick persons). Women on average spend one and half an hour more than men on domestic activities and one hour less on paid work (Figure 3). Differences are even bigger among women and men living in couples with dependent children old 0-6 years. In this group, women spend on average more time on household activities compared to men than in other groups (4.49 hours vs. 1.31 hours), reflecting huge imbalance in childcare responsibilities. At the same time, they spend much less on paid work (2.15 vs. 4.28 hours).¹⁵

¹³ SSO, LFS data.

¹⁴ World Bank Country Partnership Framework for Republic of North Macedonia for 2019-2023, p. 13, March 21, 2019

¹⁵ Ibid

⁶ <https://www.sobranie.mk/mps-en.nspk>

⁷ <https://vlada.mk/sostav-na-vladata>

⁸ <https://www.undp.org/north-macedonia/blog/gender-parity-political-life-%E2%80%93-beyond-electoral-quota>

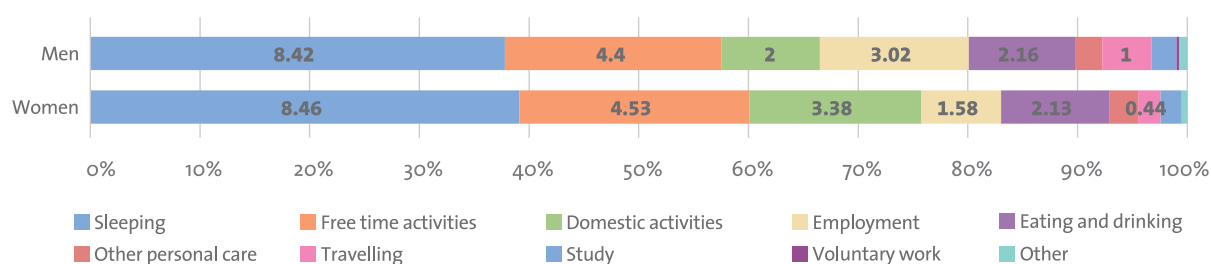
⁹ State Statistical Office (2021) Women and men in North Macedonia, https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPoslednaPublikacija_en.aspx?id=23

¹⁰ Activity rate measures proportion of employed and unemployed persons in working age population.

¹¹ Employment rate measures employed persons (any form, including for employers and self-employed, formally and informally) in working age population.

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database>

FIGURE 3:
AVERAGE TIME PER DAY SPENT ON ACTIVITIES OF PERSONS OLD 10+, 2014/2015

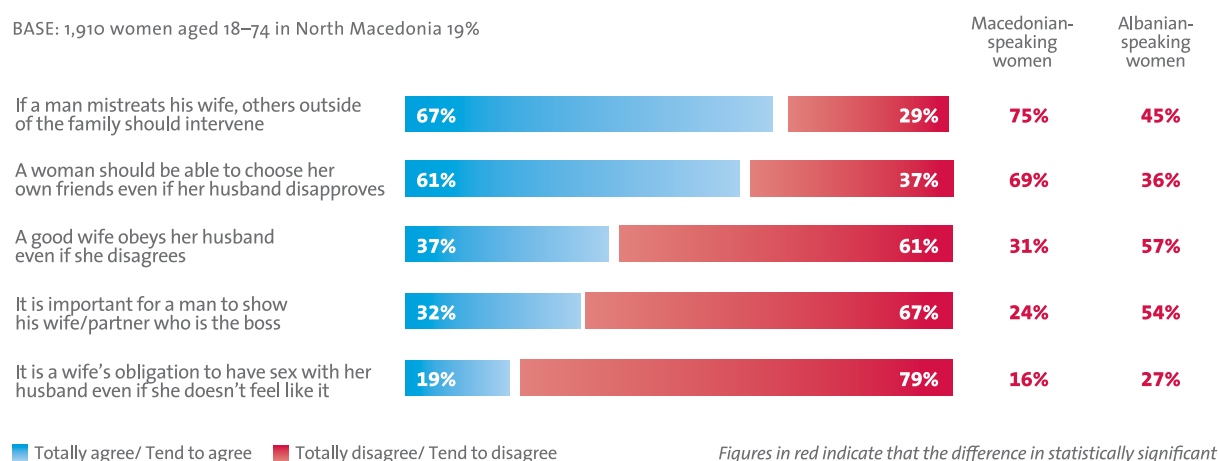


Source: Time use survey¹⁶

Weak access to resources is reason behind low economic participation of women.¹⁶ Despite guarantees of equal rights to property for women and men stipulated by the Constitutions, there are still big gaps in property ownership. Property is traditionally registered in men's names. Due to the lower employment of women and less gainful employment due to gender pay gap, women can contribute less to purchasing property. Therefore, although the Family law stipulates that property acquired in marriage can be registered under the names of both spouses, in reality often the property is registered on men. In addition, despite the fact that Constitution specifies that even if only one spouse is registered as the owner, it is considered joint registration, but in the practice only the spouse registered as the owner enjoys legal benefits from the property. This means that men primarily benefit from leasing the property or using it as collateral for a loan or as a business asset.¹⁷

Gender inequalities are underpinned and reproduced by the patriarchal norms and beliefs which are still prevalent in North Macedonia. According to the OSCE led survey on wellbeing and safety of women, more than one third of women agrees that wife should obey her husband and almost one third agrees that it is important for a man to show his partner/wife 'who is the boss'. This reflects still important share of women who hold that it is socially appropriate to keep women in submissive role, supporting unbalanced distribution of power between men and women in the sphere of private relations. In such context, intimate partner violence and domestic violence are highly tolerated and still considered as a private issue in which institutions and broader community should not intervene.

FIGURE 4:
PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL NORMS AND ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS



Source: OSCE led survey on wellbeing and safety of women: North Macedonia Result Report¹⁸

¹⁶ <https://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.15.20.pdf>

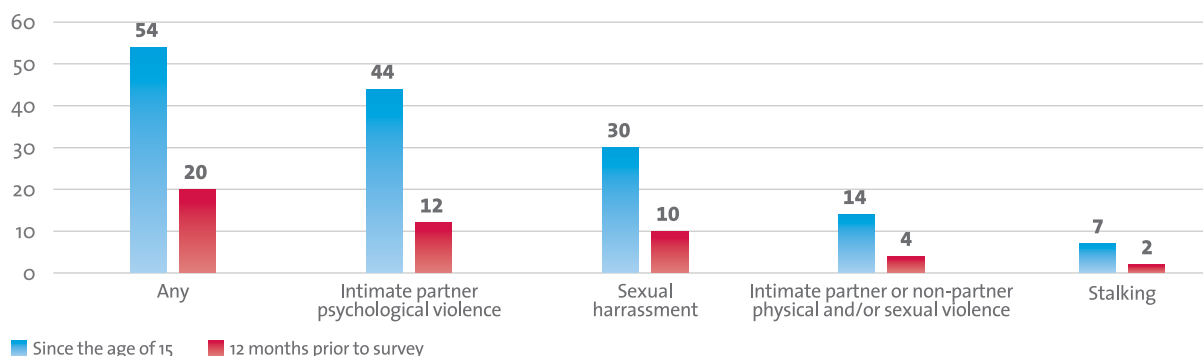
¹⁷ USAID (2019) North Macedonia Gender Analysis Report, <https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/USAID-North-Macedonia-Gender-Analysis-Report.pdf>

¹⁸ https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/5/419264_1.pdf

Asymmetric gender regimes, patriarchal culture, political conflicts and economic hardships contributed to the relatively high prevalence of various forms of gender-based violence against women in North Macedonia. According to data from OSCE survey on wellbeing and safety of women conducted in summer 2018, over half of women experienced

some form of gender-based violence since age of 15. Partner relationships carry greater danger of these forms of violence than any other. In partner violence, psychological violence is most commonly experienced. According to the research, 30% of women older than 15 have been exposed to sexual harassment and 7% of woman was a victim of stalking.

FIGURE 5:
PREVALENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NORTH MACEDONIA, 2018 (%)



Source: OSCE Survey on wellbeing and safety of Women, 2018¹⁹

Child marriage is defined as form of gender-based violence against women and girls by the Istanbul Convention. According to the 2018-2019 MICS, every tenth woman of age 20-49 years got married before age of 18. Child marriage is much more prevalent in Roma population, with 13.4% of women of the same age married before age of 15 and 45.7% married before age of 18.²⁰

These systematic and profound gender inequalities as described in the previous sections require comprehensive policy interventions. Gender responsive budgeting, therefore, is a crucial instrument to deliver such transformative policies.

1.1.2 NORMATIVE, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The legal and regulatory framework on GEEW, including the Gender responsive budgeting (GRB), as a specific tool for advancing the GEEW agenda, is closely aligned with the international and European human rights standards, conventions, and other international human rights instruments.

As a fundamental principle of the UN Charter, protection, respect, and promotion of the rights of the women is central responsibility of all states. North Macedonia is signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, as one of the most comprehensive bills of rights for women which sets up the agenda for national action to end such discrimination. In addition to CEDAW, which has an enshrined periodic reporting mechanism on the implementation of its recommendations, North Macedonia is party to seven other core UN human rights treaties,²¹ it is also signatory of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), as a landmark document covering 12 different areas of concern and action for advancing the gender equality including poverty, gender-based violence and access to power and decision making. North Macedonia is also committed to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security.

¹⁹ https://www.osce.org/files/fj/documents/3/5/419264_1.pdf

²⁰ UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018-2019, https://www.stat.gov.mk/Dokumenti/MICS_18-19.pdf

²¹ International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (1994), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1994), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1994), Convention against Torture or Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1994), Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance (2007), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2011).

Gender Equality is an important aspect of the EU accession process. The EC reports²², under chapters 23 and 24 address the compliance of national gender equality related institutions, laws and policies with the EU acquis, including alignment of the national legal framework on non-discrimination and equality mechanisms. The key objectives of EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 to end GBV, challenge gender stereotypes, gender gaps in the labour market, achieve equal participation across different sectors of the economy; address the gender pay and pension gaps; close the gender care gap and achieve gender balance in decision-making and in politics, are also reflected in the national laws and regulations of North Macedonia. There are continual efforts for harmonization of the national legal and institutional framework with the European Court of Human Rights; Council of Europe's Special Reporter on gender equality, etc. In this context, the EU integration process is deemed as an opportunity for advancing the gender mainstreaming in strategic planning and policy making in line with the obligation for securing sufficient financial and human resources to fully deliver on the EU commitments on gender equality.

The gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most widespread violations of human rights worldwide affecting one third of all women in their lifetime. The GBV including domestic violence, physical, sexual or psychological, is a pressing human rights issue in North Macedonia, as well. The landmark international treaty addressing the GBV has been the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence known as Istanbul Convention (IC), representing the first legally binding treaty in Europe that criminalizes different forms of violence against women and girls. The IC was adopted in 2011. Ratification of the IC in 2017 has been major indicator of the North Macedonia authorities' commitment to accept the main principles and legally binding standards enshrined in the IC. By and large, it has been transposed into the new Law on prevention and protection of GBV, adopted in 2021.

The Government has embraced the Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030 as "a universal framework for strengthening collective action towards common goals and challenges", making "reduced inequality" and "leave-no-one-behind" environment to be largely key principles underpinning its activities. The institutional commitments have been pronounced under the SDG 5, in particular to those referring to GEEW, SDG 5.1. The target 5.1, which calls for ending all forms of discrimination against women & girls, is accompanied

with national indicators, which supplement the official statistics with proxy indicators such as Gender pay gap in unadjusted form, % of average gross hourly earnings of men; Gender employment gap, Inactive population due to caring responsibilities by sex, % of inactive population aged 20 to 64, with source and frequency; and other targets and indicators. Indicators 5.5. and 5 a to c. hold relevance related to the equal rights of women to economic resources, ownership and control over land and alike. Meanwhile, there has been reclassification of the indicator 5.c.1. It calls on the member states to "... Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for promotion of GEEW at all levels". Indicator to measure progress on this target is SDG Indicator 5.c.1. which measures the proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocation for GEEW. This indicator sets an **international standard for gender budgeting** with capacity to ensure important data for monitoring the progress towards SDG5.

UN Women is the responsible agency to report under this target.

FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION WITH UN

The cooperation framework between UN and North Macedonia has been shaped through two consecutive cooperation strategies: *UN support to North Macedonia's national development priorities: UN Partnership for Sustainable Development (UN PSD) 2016-2020 and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UN SDCF) 2021-2025.*

Since 2014, UN Women has been supporting the governments of several Western Balkan countries – North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania, in promotion and gradual introduction of the **Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting**. Since 2011 the UN Women has implemented project interventions in North Macedonia in this area. These projects contributed to the gradual development of the legal and regulatory framework and policies governing the GRB at both national and local levels. They have contributed to implementation of international and national GE commitments by strengthening the capacities of central and local governments to integrate GRB in policy planning and budgeting and of non-governmental actors to hold governments accountable to GE commitments using GRB as a tool. The demand-driven and targeted technical assistance on GRB provided to government institutions, public administration, local governments and CSOs, paved the way for a few consecutive project phases with focus on advancing the institutionalization of GRB by promoting gender responsive laws, policies and action plans, and by improving the accountability mechanisms at central and local level. The inherent weaknesses of the controls and oversight functions of

²²For further reference, see for example EC, North Macedonia Report 2021, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/north-macedonia-report-2021_en

the still prevalent line item budgeting and accounting system in North Macedonia are being addressed through the GRB as a tool which brings gradual change aimed at more equitable distribution of public resources between women and men.

This overall objective of the UN Women led interventions have been supported by two UN strategic documents, the UNPSD and the UNSCDF. Under the UN PSD 2016-2020 relevant strategic outcomes were: *Outcome 5 on GE* which envisages that by 2020, state institutions become fully accountable to gender equality and anti-discrimination commitments; *Outcome 3 on Social Inclusion* which sets as objective better inclusion of socially excluded groups and their equitable access to social services and *Outcome 2 on Good Governance* aiming at strengthening local institutions so they are better able to design and deliver high-quality services. The strategic impact of the activities under these UN PSD outcomes imply that UN Women will engage in strengthening national capacities in gender sensitive policy making and budgeting by encouraging national and local institutions to consider impact of a range of policies and budgets to ensure that women's interests are adequately reflected.

Under the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025 relevant outcomes are: *Outcome 1 which envisages that by the 2025 the living standard of all people in North Macedonia is improved through equal access to decent work and productive employment generated by inclusive and innovative business ecosystem, and Outcome 4 which is focused on good governance, setting as an objective that by 2025, people in whole country benefit from improved rule of law, evidence-based, anticipatory and gender-responsive policies, greater social cohesion, and effective service delivery by transparent, accountable and responsive institutions.*

The strategic impact of the activities under these UNSCDF outcomes suggest, at one hand, that UN Women will encourage a novel integrated approach under which relevant authorities and their nongovernmental partners will ensure effective multi-agency cooperation and multi-sectoral response (MSR) to the economic empowerment of rural women and their increased participation in rural development policy and decision making (Outcome 1). Under Outcome 4, UN Women will continue with the activities leading to implementation of gender-responsive, age and disability sensitive planning and budgeting as central to the Good governance strategic outcome. The latter assumes enhancement of administrative capacities for gender responsive planning and budgeting, and transposition and implementation of the EU Gender Equality Acquis in national legislation

and other related strategic documents. In effect, public oversight of gender responsive budgeting and new gender machinery will be further strengthened.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of North Macedonia guarantees equality of its citizens regardless of the gender, ethnic background or social status. The Constitution and its principles are implemented through laws and implementing regulations with strict observance of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, which are exercised by the state, non-state institutions and the local self-government units.

The legal framework for gender equality consists of a plethora of strategic documents and respective action plans for their operationalization, legal acts and associated implementing regulations, largely aligned with the EU and international standards. This framework includes, inter alia, **Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination** (2020), **National Strategy for Anti-discrimination, Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men** (2014), **National Strategy for Gender Equality** (2013-2020), **National Action Plan for Gender Equality** (2018-2020), **NAP on Implementation of the Istanbul Convention** (2018-2023), the new **Law on Prevention and Protection against the GBV** (2021), etc.

At the end of this evaluation, the **Organic Budget Law** was adopted after delays, influencing even some last-minute changes in the findings, conclusions and recommendations. As first gender sensitive budget law, this Law is of crucial importance for the legal framework for Gender equality as it introduces at the national and local levels systematic gender mainstreaming in policy planning and assigning budget allocations for the implementation of such policies, thus enabling better planning but also monitoring and tracing the allocations for GEEW.

Some of the major sectoral strategies and action plans addressing fundamental rights and gender equality have expired in 2020, hence, there has been a need for their replacement with new forward looking fundamental acts and other documents. Recent adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law, which entered into force in October 2020, endorsed protection against various forms of discrimination including sexual orientation and gender identity. The Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GBV), fully aligned with the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW recommendations, was adopted in 2021, ensuring holistic and comprehensive approach to these complex issues.

The new **Draft Law on Gender Equality** has been drafted under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy but its further review is pending for more than a year. The Draft, among other improvements endorses strengthening of the institutional mechanisms to support improvement of the status of women and gender equality across all branches and levels of Government. Likewise, a new **National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2022-2027** has been adopted by the Parliament in July 2022.

GENDER EQUALITY MECHANISMS

According to the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, entities responsible for endorsement and implementation of the gender equality and mainstreaming measures are: the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Government, state administrative bodies, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), the Ombuds Office, local government units, political parties and media.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy bears the main responsibility for coordination of gender equality policies through its Department of Equal Opportunities (DEO). As the main gender equality mechanism, it carries out the following activities:

- promotes and introduces the principle of equal opportunities in all areas of the social life, in the political processes at all levels and in all stages;
- participates in the creation and monitoring of gender equality measures;
- cooperates with the relevant institutions and contributes to the preparation of laws, strategic documents, reports and other gender-related regulations;
- prepares, monitors and reports on the national gender equality strategy and action plans;
- co-ordinates and supports the operation of the intersectoral/inter-ministerial group for promotion of equal opportunities for women and men;
- participates in the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the international agreements and obligations in the field of equal opportunities; and
- cooperates with the coordinators for equal opportunities from central and local institutions.²³

²³ Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Article 12, Official Gazette No. 6/2012.

The MLSP also coordinates the Inter-Ministerial/ Inter-sectoral Group on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, established as a consultative and advisory body for promotion of gender equality. The group is composed of representatives of relevant ministries, CSOs, employers' associations, experts, representatives of the local governments and other relevant bodies. The Group is tasked with promoting the concept of gender mainstreaming of general policies and all public institutions, providing direction and guidance, and monitoring the progress of harmonization of national legislation with the European Union acquis. Some analysis reports on the limited human and financial resources of the MLSP DEO to undertake all these tasks.²⁴

The public administration bodies, including all ministries, are required to appoint a Coordinator and a Deputy Coordinator for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men from their staff to mainstream gender in the strategic plans and budgets as well as to monitor the effects and the impact of their programs on women and men. The coordinators are obliged to report annually to the MLSP.

The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (Sobranie) is responsible for integration of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men in legal initiatives, policies, and programs as well as for the oversight of the implementation of international and national obligations. The main gender equality mechanism within the Assembly is its Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which acts as a standing working body.

The Ombuds Office is the independent governmental human rights institution entitled to initiate legislative amendments aiming at the enhancement of gender equality, to produce special reports related to specific issues related to the gender equality react in case of gender-based human rights violations and intervene in court cases friend of the court.²⁵

Each local government has an obligation to establish a Commission for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men composed of municipal councilors as well as to designate a Coordinator and a Deputy Coordinator for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men. The municipalities have an obligation to include a gender perspective in their strategic and annual plans and activities as well as in the annual budgets.

²⁴ S. Gavric at al., Gender Matters, Manual for Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Staff on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/5/500983.PDF>

²⁵ www.ombudsman.mk.

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

The first initiatives to introduce GRB in North Macedonia can be tracked back to 2008 and linked to a UN Women regional project at that time which also involved North Macedonia. The key national partner was the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and its Department of Equal Opportunities as the central gender equality mechanism. The follow up interventions in the later stages demonstrated how GRB can be used as an effective tool to support the government institutions to identify the gender specific needs of women and men in their area of responsibility, how to address them through programs and how to allocate the financial means by planning budget allocations in gender sensitive manner.

The implementation of gender responsive budgeting was accompanied with amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and adoption of the Strategy for introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting (2012). These legal and strategic frameworks defined the measures for systematic integration of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men in the process of creation, implementation and monitoring of policies and budgets at national and local level. In 2013 in accordance with the Law and the Strategy, the Ministry of Finance amended the budget circular and assigned three pilot ministries (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with the Employment Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water economy, Ministry of Health) to select sectoral programs for gender analysis and to develop gender indicators in order to follow progress towards improving the gender responsiveness of the respective programs. In 2014, in compliance with the provisions set in the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, a Methodology on the application of the gender responsive budgeting was adopted by the Government. As of 2015, the amended budget circular and the provision regarding the selection of programs for gender analysis of the budget and developing the gender indicators started to apply to all ministries.

The Government commitments aimed at gradual institutionalization of the GRB were further reflected in the National Action Plan (2018-2020) for implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy, by incorporating GRB as one of the strategic priority areas. The National Program for Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization²⁶ (2015-2020) emphasizes strongly the introduction of the GRB and budgetary policies at local level and possibly its expansion in all local self-government units. In effect, in 2019 the Ministry of Finance included in the

Budget circular for the local self-government units (LSGUs) specific budget item for gender equality which obliges LSGUs to allocate budget for advancing gender equality at local level²⁷

The technical capacity of civil servants and institutions, at central and local level, and more substantial involvement of CSOs in advocacy for GRB and for greater gender related budget literacy and budget monitoring training continued to be improved. Meanwhile the longstanding efforts aimed at the institutionalization of GRB, supported by series of gradual strategic policy based, legal and regulatory efforts of the Government, have coincided with the major upcoming public finance reform. In effect, the GRB approach started to gain relevance and became visible in the government agenda since it has been organically and structurally connected to the respective reform package, which inter alia, aims to introduce the program-based budgeting. Under the Ministry of Finance proposed and the Government adopted 2022-2026 Fiscal Policy, the Government commits itself to gradual fiscal consolidation. The Organic Budget Law, adopted by the Parliament in September 2022, after delays, proposes transitioning from line item budgets to program/performance/results based budgeting as a window of opportunity for integrating the principle of equal opportunities in the new normative framework and the new program budget classification. The program classification is to be redefined and clear goals and targets established for each level of program classification and introduction of wide range of performance indicators – results, outputs and outcomes.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND TOC

1.2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project *Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia* has been implemented from 1st October 2018 until 30th September 2022, with Extended Donor Agreement with SDC until 31st March 2023. The project is financed by Sweden with amount of SEK 11,700,000 and by Switzerland with amount of USD 1,998,602. The project has been implemented at central and local level, including 31 local communities: Kochani, Strumica, Bitloa, Gostivar, Tetovo, Sveti Nikole, Bogovinje, Novaci, Bogdanci, Mavrovo-Rostushe, Kriva Palanka, Ohrid, Stip, Skopje-Centar, Kisela Voda, Gazi

²⁶ http://www.mls.gov.mk/images/documents/lokalnasamourprava/EN_WB/PROGRAMA_ENWEB.pdf

²⁷ 2019 Budget Circular Guidelines, MoF <https://bit.ly/2AToxD2>

Baba, Aerodrom, Gjorce Petrov, Kumanovo, Veles, Gevgelija, Staro Nagorichane, Karpos, Makedonska Kamenica, Delcevo, Struga, Vinica, Caska, Makedonski Brod, Kavadarci and city of Skopje.

The target groups of the project include: Budget and finance unit of the Ministry of Finance, finance units of central and local level budget users, civil servants in selected line ministries and local self-government units, gender machinery in the country which includes at central level the Department for Equal Opportunities, line ministries' coordinators for equal opportunities and municipal coordinators for equal opportunities, Members of parliaments and local councillors in 31 targeted municipality. Civil society organizations (CSOs) of different type were important project beneficiaries, including grass-root and local women's organizations, watchdog organizations, experienced advocacy and activist organizations. It was planned to support at least 60 CSOs initiatives. Local women mobilized through the project activities as agents of change were ultimate beneficiaries, including women from vulnerable social groups (rural, minorities, socially excluded, etc.). It was planned to reach over 3500 of these women.

1.2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

UN Women Programme Office in the Republic of North Macedonia in line with the priorities set in the UN Women Strategic Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021-2025), is supporting the country to fulfil National and International commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women. Over the past years, UN Women has provided extensive support to national and local stakeholders to strengthen democratic governance and advance women's rights through initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender in policy planning and budgeting.

The project relies on past and ongoing efforts, lessons learned and good practices on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and responds to the increasing demand created for GRB expertise, knowledge and tools at both central and local level in the country.

Important progress was made towards advancing GRB in the national strategic planning and policy making processes: new National Strategy for Gender Equality (2022-2027) was adopted by the Parliament which includes gender responsive budgeting among the key strategic objectives; the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (2021 – 2027) and the Strategy for Regional Development of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021 – 2031) for the first time include gender specific objectives and indicators.

1.2.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

The overall goal of the Project is to improve women's lives and support the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups through integration of gender perspective at all stages of national and local policy-making and budgeting processes.

The project planned to contribute towards achieving **two outcomes**:

1. The Government's public finance management and the strategic planning processes respond to the different needs of women and men through effective application of gender responsive budgeting
2. Civil society organizations, women, including the most vulnerable, actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and benefit from public policies and budgets.

At central level, the project applies **strategies focused on engendering the Public Finance Management reform**, to promote more inclusive and transparent governance, accountable to the needs and interests of women and men, including the most vulnerable groups. The project supports the idea of strong national gender machinery, which uses its full potential and has taken the lead in ensuring policies and laws fully embed gender equality principles and gender is mainstreamed in sectoral programmes of state institutions and line ministries.

At local level, the **project interventions are focused on policies and budgets to improve the life of women and men from the most vulnerable groups**, particularly by upscaling proven approaches and good practices identified in previous GRB interventions. Additionally, the project is further promoting the use of GRB as a tool to enable local governments to recognize the value and potential for local development and inclusive growth by investing in gender-responsive social services, particularly social protection and care services.

The project applies a **human-centered approach** by finding solutions based on the needs identified by beneficiaries themselves, who act as agents of change.

CSO networking and advocacy efforts are supported to enable structured and continued oversight and analysis of budgetary allocation and spending from a gender perspective, as well as to generate missing watch dog evidence and expert policy recommendations. The interventions are **backed-up with capacity building efforts** for providers and users of gender data, statistics and its usage for evidence-based policy analyses and interventions.

1.2.4 THEORY OF CHANGE

The ToC is a widely used project development and evaluation approach that describes how a project is supposed to work or has worked and created a desired change, explaining the causalities between resources, activities, short and long-term outcomes. The ToC takes into account a specific context in which the intervention takes place, interactions of specific groups of stakeholders, explaining what else in addition to the project intervention has to happen for the causal linkages to be realized.

Project document contains original ToC, which is presented in the Annex 1. During the inception phase and based on initial discussion between ET and Project team at the inception workshop, ToC was further elaborated for comprehensive understanding of the project intervention logic by the ET.

Reconstructing the ToC, the ET understood that the Project is designed based on complex perception of problems that reproduce gender inequalities and prevent or hinder changes that can transform gender relations. As presented in the chapter on situation regarding gender equality, in North Macedonia, despite advancement, gender inequalities are still pervasive and manifested in all areas of public and private life. Reforms aiming at transformation of gender relations and promoting gender equality are hindered by uncompleted public administration reform, national policies which are not systematically and consistently gender responsive. Although many efforts are already invested in introducing gender responsive budgeting, this is enormous change of public administration and public finance that require time, increased capacities of diverse stakeholders, new procedures and practices, and strength to counter vested interests in old procedures. GRB is still faced with many barriers, such as low capacities of institutions and staff, inconsistent implementation, narrow expert community which can provide support compared to other areas of gender equality, as well as low competences of CSOs to act as watchdogs.

Starting from such a situation and aiming at achieving ambitious goal of improved lives of women, including those from the most vulnerable populations, with help of improved government's public finance management and strategic planning processes which respond to their needs, the project has planned series of interventions. These interventions include:

- Introducing gender perspective in programme budgeting as part of Public Finance Management Reform;
- Promoting active role of national gender equality machinery to lead and oversee GRB and gender mainstreaming (GM) of policies;

- Supporting Local governments to be capable of applying GRB tools;
- Supporting members of Parliament to be able and willing to monitor and advocate for gender responsive policies and budgets;
- Enabling women, including most vulnerable to voice their needs and from passive budget recipients become agents of change;
- Supporting CSOs produce evidence-based analysis and advocate for gender responsive planning and budgeting.

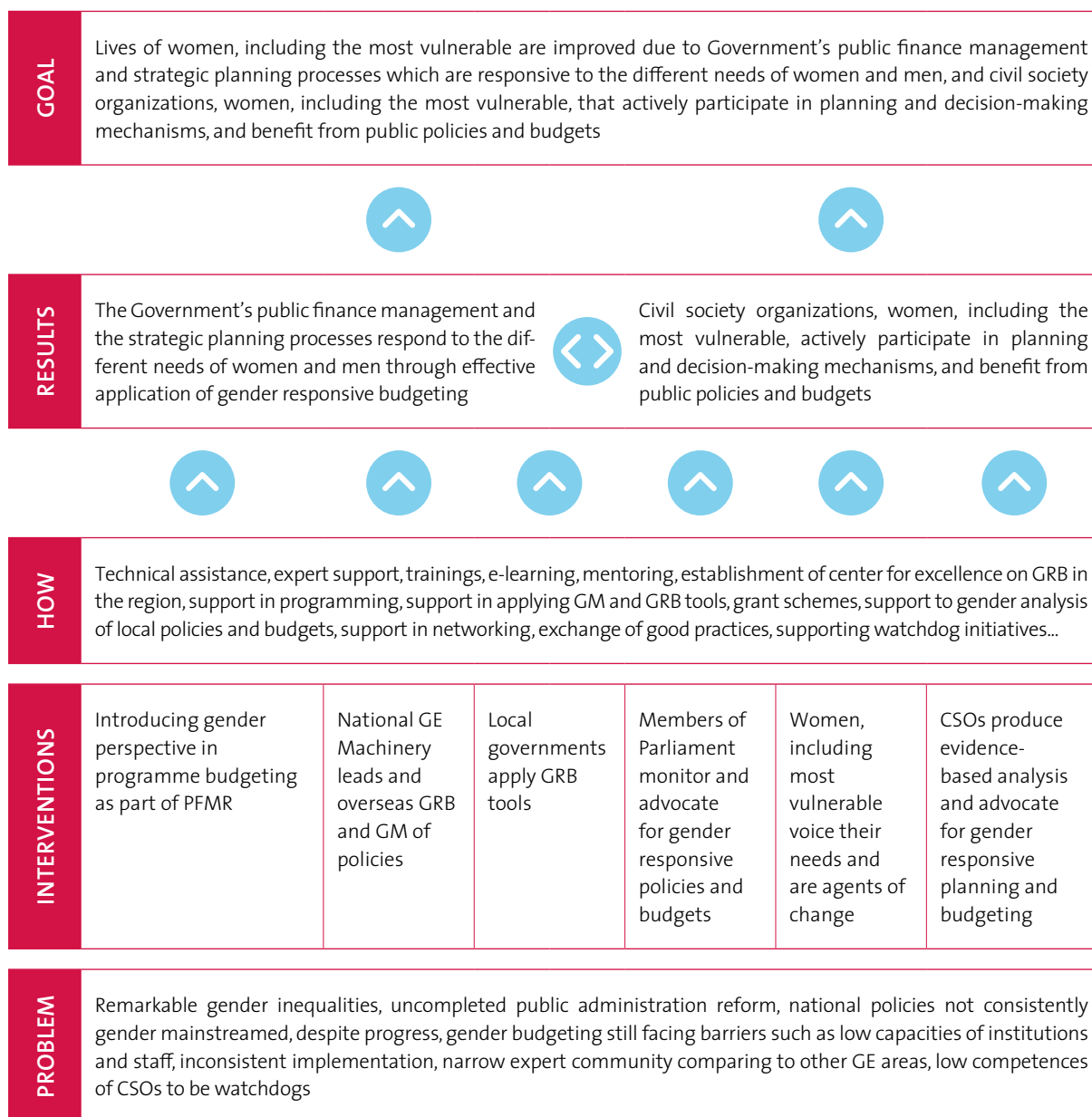
These interventions are delivered through sets of activities, including technical assistance, expert support, trainings, e-learning, mentoring, establishment of the Resource Centre for Gender Responsive Policymaking and Budgeting in the region, support in programming, support in applying GM and GRB tools, grant schemes, support to gender analysis of local policies and budgets, support in networking, exchange of good practices, support to watchdog initiatives, etc.

As a result of such interventions, the government's public finance management and the strategic planning processes respond to the different needs of women and men through effective application of gender responsive budgeting while at the same time CSOs, women, including the most vulnerable, actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and benefit from public policies and budgets.

The evaluation tested several assumptions:

- If governmental stakeholders responsible for planning budgets and policies at national and local levels have sufficient capacities, legally defined obligations and procedures, and adequate tools, they will be able to effectively apply GRB.
- If there is leadership role of GEMs at national and local levels, the processes of introduction and application of GRB will be smoother and more effective.
- If there is increased citizens activity in regard to the budgeting processes in the form of mobilization of women and placing clear demands related to their needs in front of governments as well as in the form of monitoring of planning and execution of budgets based on women's needs, there will be more effective local GRB process and women in local communities will benefit more as their needs will be answered.

**FIGURE 6:
RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE**



1.2.5 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The Project document identifies the following Project’s key stakeholders: **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP)** with its **Department of Equal Opportunities (DEO)**, as its constituent part, **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, and **other line ministries/state institutions** and selected civil servants which perform roles and responsibilities within these institutions, members of the Parliament and local councillors²⁸

²⁸Project document on Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in FYR Macedonia (2018-2022), p. 15

at the **local self-government units (LSGUs)** and the Coordinators for Equal Opportunities within the gender structures, other staff assigned to the **local commissions for equal opportunities**, and the **CSOs**.

The MoLSP’s motivation and commitment to the Project, as a key stakeholder, can be derived from its original mandate or its specific strategic alignment to the Project. The MoLSP’s mandate includes, inter alia, creating policies for elimination of gender-based discrimination and gender inequalities and implementation of the principle of gender equality, and integration of this principle in the fiscal system

of the state and the entities, which strengthens the Ministry's interest and by-in into the Project. In addition, the MoLSP's Department of Equal Opportunities (DEO) coordinates the activities related to the gender equality on national and local levels, through review of laws, acts and decisions proposed by the Government providing policy and operational measures and initiatives for overcoming problems that women encounter. Hence, the MoLSP is the natural and strategic partner with the Project.

Ministry of Finance (MoF), as a custodian of the national budget, performs the tasks of the budget preparation and execution and the balance sheet of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, and therefore plays a crucial role in the fiscal and macroeconomic policymaking and management of the country's public finance. In performing its functions, the MoF ensures that the gender is properly mainstreamed under the ongoing Public Finance Management (PFM) reform. Within such described roles and responsibilities, the MoF arises as another key Project's stakeholder. As such, its strategic role is further demonstrated in its mandated position to introduce the program-based budgeting which, inter alia, enables tagging of the budgetary resources to programs and activities advancing gender equality at national and local levels.

Both the MoLSP and particularly the MoF have strong power positions with a banning power and power to hold and delay the decisions which may be critical for the course and pace of the integration and full institutionalization of the gender responsive budgeting into the fiscal regulations and gender equality mechanisms in the line ministries and at the level of the local self-government units.

We, at the Ministry of Finance, perform control of the legality of spending at the level of the LSGUs, and based on positive findings, clear the transfer of funds through the treasury system. Hence, we perform control and supervisory functions based on the LSGUs' reports on the gender sensitive budget spending, although we cannot monitor all the programs in their entirety.

Representatives of the Ministry of Finance

The other stakeholders in the Project are other line ministries, other state institutions and selected civil servants which perform roles and responsibilities within the budget units of the line ministries or local self-government units, or within the gender mech-

anisms, members of the Parliament, local councilors and staff assigned to the local commissions for equal opportunities. Line ministries are responsible for transforming the sectoral priorities into concrete interventions in line with the gender equality requirements and commitments. For example, one of the ministries deeply involved in the project was the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MoAFWE), which as a key institution in country's rural and agricultural development, sets national policies, designs respective policy reforms, measures and programs that address the needs and challenges of women in rural areas.

Since recently, the State Audit Office (SAO) has assumed a stakeholder role in the Project given the public oversight function which the SAO performs in relation to the financial accountability of the Government and other state institutions. As an independent state body, the SAO is accountable to the Parliament, with the mandate to examine the financial transactions defined as government expenditures in accordance with the Law on Budgets and other legally defined use of funds, as well as to assess the use of funds in terms of the quality of public sector program performance. In this line, the SAO is well placed to integrate gender perspective in audits that SAO performs and enhance accordingly the public institutions' accountability on the alignment of national gender equality policies with respective budget allocations using the GRB as a tool.

Last, but not least, are the direct and ultimate beneficiaries of the Project – women and the most excluded groups who's benefit from the Project is in the raising their awareness, improving their skills and wellbeing and having their voice strengthened to invoke their needs, priorities and lift the barriers to access to and to influence public policies and services. In line with the principle 'Leaving no one behind', the support to women and the most vulnerable groups is coupled with the position of a yet another stakeholder – the CSOs. The role of the CSOs is dual – they are stakeholders and as such have considerable power to influence the course of the Project, when they play and strengthen their role of gender budget watchdogs whose primary function is to seek the accountability in regard to the gender equality at the local level. On the other side, the CSO are beneficiary of the Project who are gaining and enhancing their budget monitoring capacities.

In addition, members of the Parliament and the Club of Women Parliamentarians and the influence that they can exercise suggests their relevance as stakeholder group and specific role which they play in relation to the Project's objective.

Finally, UN Women as the lead agency on gender equality among the UN agencies in North Macedonia is in position to ensure that all three strategic priority areas and all four outcome areas of the SDCF are properly gender mainstreamed. To that end, the UN Women will encourage synergies with other UN agencies in order to ensure the successful implementation of the program interventions. In achieving this goal, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator is the natural stakeholder and partner

in implementation. More specifically, cooperation is established with UNDP as the two agencies' comparative advantages in the field of good governance and gender responsive policy making represent an entry point for close coordination of the interventions at local level. UN Women is closely supporting the UNDP program for empowering municipal councils by extending technical and expert support on gender responsive budgeting.

TABLE 1:
PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders	Their role in the project	Gains from involvement in the evaluation
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Project partners, duty bearers who have decision-making authority over the intervention such as governing bodies	Integrating gender perspective in policies and budgets, in particular in the program budgeting as part of the Public Finance Management Reform
National gender machinery at the MoLSP (DEO), MoF, Min of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and at the number of line ministries and other state institutions ; Civil servants in selected line ministries and LSGUs members of the Parliament,	Direct beneficiaries, duty bearers who have direct responsibility for the intervention, such as program managers	Transforming sectoral priorities into concrete interventions in line with gender equality requirements and commitments
Local self-government units, municipal councils,	Direct beneficiaries, secondary duty bearers, such as the private sector or parents	Representing the interests of citizens according to the relevant laws and implementing regulations
CSOs; Association of LSGU,-ZELS, Network of associations of LSGU in CEE-NALAS	Project partners, rights holders (individually or through the civil society organizations acting on their behalf) who are the intended and unintended beneficiaries of the intervention	Monitor government actions and implementation of programs and demand accountability
The most vulnerable and socially excluded groups in society, including rural women	Ultimate beneficiaries, rights holders (individually or through the civil society organizations acting on their behalf) who should be represented in the intervention but are not, or who are negatively affected by the intervention	Voicing their needs and acting as agents of change

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The main purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the project interventions from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability.

This was a final project evaluation and had both, summative and formative character. OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)²⁹ were used to summarize information and capture results achieved at outcome and output levels, lessons learnt and sustainability perspectives. From a forward-looking perspective, the evaluation aimed to provide action-oriented recommendations to UN Women project office in North Macedonia with regards to its further work on promotion of GRB.

Based on such rationale, the evaluation produced findings and recommendations for the project team (primary users), which can be used for the preparation of next phase of the project. It has also informed other relevant stakeholders (secondary users), such as donors, about what is needed to be supported in the next period, and regional GRB UN Women team providing insights in where is in the process North Macedonia compared with other countries and how it can contribute to the regional processes in the future.

The evaluation objectives are to:

- Analyse the relevance and coherence of the project objectives, strategy and approach at the national and local levels for the Government support to comply with national and international gender equality commitments.
- Assess the effectiveness of the project intervention on the target groups across the two outcomes.

- Assess organizational efficiency and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the intervention.
- Assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in advancing gender equality in the target groups.
- Analyse how human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the project implementation
- Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of gender mainstreaming and good governance.
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices.

The evaluation was comprehensive, focused on all project areas at both national and local levels. All 31 municipalities participating in the project (listed in the section 1.2.1) were covered.

In terms of time scope, the evaluation covered implementation period until the July 2022, which left out still six months of implementation as the project was extended to March 2023. Due to the still ongoing activities, it was not possible to fully assess the project performance, particularly regarding the full-scale impact.

²⁹ OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

3. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 EVALUATION DESIGN

The evaluation used theory based and contribution analysis approach, aiming to describe how the project worked and created a desired change, explaining the causalities between resources, activities, short and long-term outcomes. The ToC took into account the context in which the project took place, interactions of specific groups of stakeholders, explaining how causal links worked and identifying what else has to happen for the causal linkages to be realized. The evaluation was designed based on the terms of reference (TOR- presented in the Annex 6), reviewed project documentation and consultations with UN Women.

The methodology employed mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to understand complexity of the processes and structures. In terms of lessons learned and good practice models, the evaluation team utilized appreciative inquiry and positive deviances approaches that focused on existing strengths but also identified main areas of possible improvement and challenges to the implementation.

The evaluation adhered to UN Women Evaluation Policy³⁰, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation³¹, Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct³², UNEG guidance on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations with gender responsive and human rights approaches³³ integrated into the scope and conduct of the evaluation. GEEW and human rights were integrated in the approach, including evaluation criteria and questions, and in generation of findings, conclusions and recommendations. Conclusions and recommendations are based on gender related data and gender analysis. Evaluation took into account

UN commitment on disability inclusion³⁴ and covered disability through evaluation questions.

The evaluation was based on the gender responsive methodology. This means that gender perspective was incorporated in the analytical framework, which encompassed a number of gender issues:

- Gender aspects of policy planning, programming and budgeting at national and local levels;
- Development of gender responsive tools, methodologies, guidelines, data;
- Changes in awareness and perception of the importance and different aspects of gender equality end empowerment of women;
- Issues related to the engagement and capacities, strategies of mobilization, advocacy and watchdog performance among women's organizations;
- Specific perspective, needs, experiences of women in local communities regarding the everyday life challenges, needs and mobilization for the local budgeting and policies that will better address these needs;
- Specific needs and mobilization experiences of women from vulnerable groups: women from rural and remote areas, underdeveloped communities, faced with social exclusion and poverty.

Gender disaggregated data were used where available. However, due to the strong focus of project on women vast majority of persons participating in the evaluation were women. The evaluation was implemented in four phases: Inception (initial consultations with UN Women team and documentation review, development of evaluation methodology and inception report); Data collection (documentation review, semi-structured interviews during data collection country mission, self-administrated questionnaires); Data analysis (data analysis, presentation of preliminary findings) and Reporting (preparation and presentation of the final report).

³⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/10/evaluation-policy-of-the-United-Nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women>

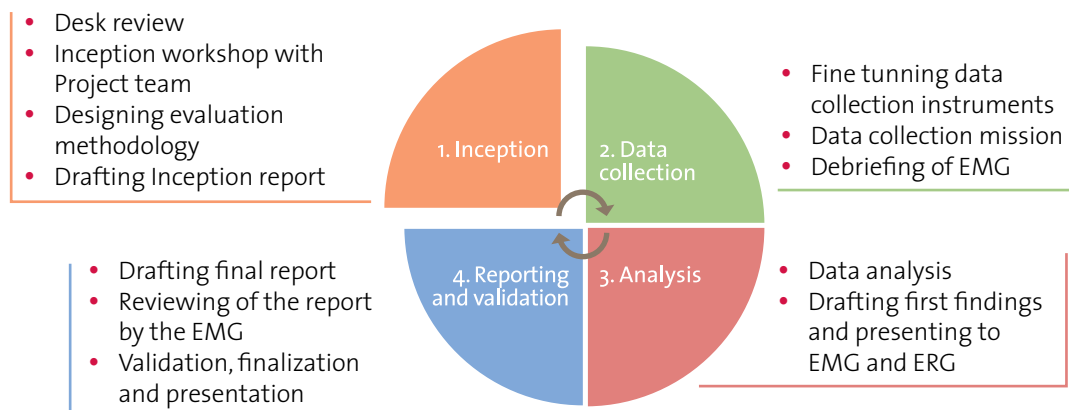
³¹ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914; t>

³² <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

³³ Including: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation-Towards UNEG Guidance; UNEG Handbook for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspectives in Evaluations in the UN System

³⁴ UN Disability Inclusion Strategy for further reference: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/03/UNDIS_20-March-2019_for-HLCM.P.pdf

**FIGURE 7:
THE EVALUATION PROCESS**



3.2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology used mixed methods of data collection to build evidence base: desk review of documents, reports, studies, secondary data, and primary data collected through semi-structured individual or group interviews, focus group discussions and self-administrated online questionnaires with representatives of local self-governments. The sample was purposeful, and reflected well project partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Different methods of data collection were used with regard to different respondents:

- Individual interviews were used with representatives of donors, some ministries and local self-governments, experts and academia representatives;
- Group interviews were used with some technical teams from certain ministries (for example DEO, MoF), representatives of public institutions, CSOs teams;
- Focused group discussions were used with women agents of change and GRB experts working with local communities;
- Self-administrated online questionnaires were used with local self-governments, including 31 LSGs that were project beneficiaries and 10 that did not participate in the project (as control group). However, not all LSGs filled the questionnaire, so at the end data were collected from 28 LSGs (23 LSGs that participated in the project and 5 that did

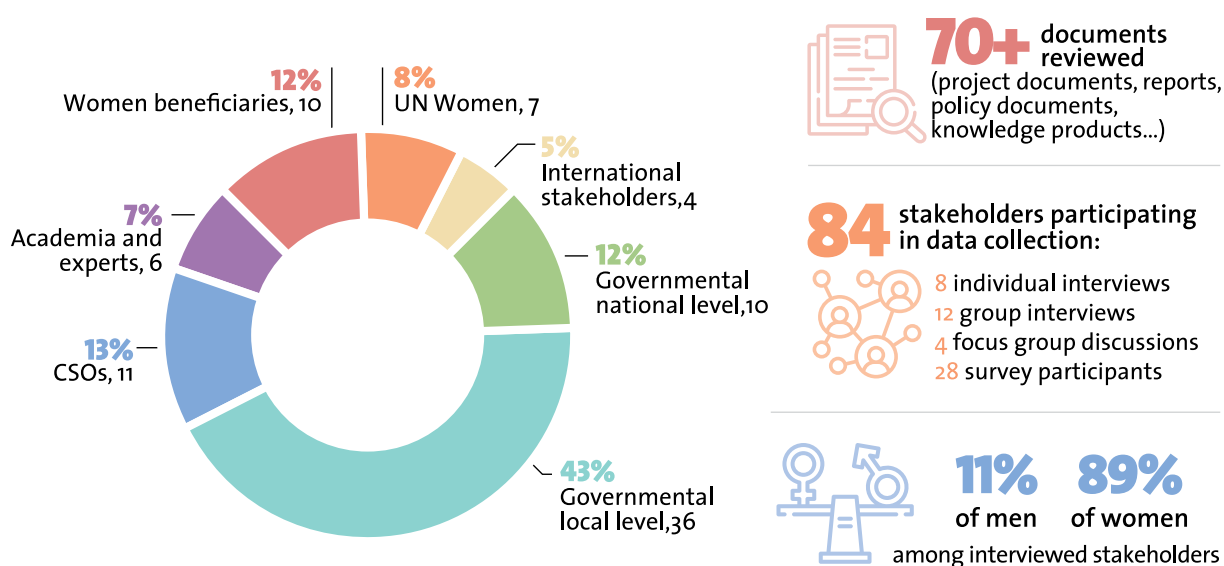
not participate in the project). The questionnaire entailed questions about level of development of GM in local policies, existence of local GEMs and action plans, as well as self-assessment of capacities to implement GRB and extent to which GRB is introduced in local budgeting. The idea was to compare participating and non-participating LSGs in regard to their capacities and practices of GM and GRB, in order to assess the effect of project support (it was expected that participating LSGs will have higher capacities to implement GM and GRB).

The full list of stakeholders participating in the evaluation mission is presented in Annex 5, while data collection instruments are presented in the Annex 7.

Women from vulnerable groups were included in the data collection to the extent they were included in the project activities, mainly as part of the local women's groups mobilized as agents of change. There was no specific focus on particular groups of vulnerable women, as project did not have such focus.

Evaluation team managed to build robust evidence for the assessment of the evaluation criteria, with considerable number of reviewed documents and interviewed stakeholders.

FIGURE 8:
BUILDING EVIDENCE FOR EVALUATION



DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using mixed method software – MAXQDA. All interview and FGD notes were coded, and qualitative analysis was conducted along OECD/DAC criteria and evaluation questions. Quantitative data obtained from the LSG online survey were analysed using Excel. However, detailed comparative analysis between participating and non-participating municipalities was not possible due to the small number of cases below the statistical reliability threshold.

LIMITATIONS

Main limitations were related to the holiday season and lower availability of informants. This impacted methodological design mainly in regard to the intention to produce case study on local communities which could serve as benchmarks for GRB. The case study must rely on the triangulation of evidence, meaning that data should be collected from multiple stakeholders from the same municipality. However, due to the lower availability of stakeholders in different municipalities (initial plan was to have interviews in 3 municipalities) the data collection was expanded to six municipalities, but with fewer and different stakeholders. For example, in some municipalities only representatives of LSGs were interviewed, in other only representatives of CSOs or women beneficiaries. At the end, field visit

was organized to Struga, Bitola, Strumica, Demir Kapija, Shtip and Sveti Nikole, but due to the lack of opportunity to replicate same sample the idea to produce case study was abandoned.

Another limitation is related to the quantitative on-line survey with LSGs. As it was already mentioned above, the number of municipalities answering the survey was too small to conduct comparative analysis that will provide insights in the impact of the project on participating municipalities on their capacity to perform GM and GRB vs. non-participating municipalities. One of the probable reasons for insufficient response rate for quantitative analysis was the high holiday season which might influence absence of persons responsible for answering the questionnaire.

The third important limitation is related to the assessment of impact and partly sustainability. Analysis of impact requires some time after project implementation as full effects will need some time to appear in their full scale. Since the project is still not completed and some actions might need more time to have effect, the assessment of impact could underestimate the scale of it. Similarly, although sustainability is planned even at the beginning of the project design, the most appropriate, contextualized plan could be elaborated at the end of the project. Therefore, some aspects of sustainability might not be sufficiently visible at this stage of the project.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation has fully complied with UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and UNEG Ethical Code of Conduct.

The evaluation was conducted with integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the ‘do no harm’ principle.

Focus groups, meetings and interviews were held with a tone of respect, openness, and rapport. Evaluators have respected the rights of institutions, organizations and individuals to provide information in confidence. Before collecting any data, an explanation of the purpose and the intention of the evaluation was given in Macedonian, or English (depending on the language of the interview) and explicit oral consent was obtained. The presentation of findings in this report respects the principles of anonymity of the key informants.

3.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

TABLE 2:
EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation questions	
Relevance	1. To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? Was the choice of interventions relevant to the situation of the target groups?
	2. To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to gender equality priorities in the country?
	3. To what extent is the intervention aligned with international frameworks? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To agreements and conventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment (CEDAW, Beijing, Istanbul Convention) b. To GE standards in EU accession process? c. To Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda?
	4. To what extent key stakeholders were involved in programme’s conceptualization and design process?
	5. To what extent the project intervention continues to be relevant for the situation of gender equality and needs of relevant stakeholders? How was relevance ensured after covid-19 pandemic outbreak?
Coherence	Internal coherence
	6. To what extent does the project fit within UN Women’s Strategic Plan and initiatives in North Macedonia and more broadly, Western Balkan Region? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To what extent does the project fit within UN Women’s Strategic Plan and interrelated three-fold mandate and UN Women’s work in North Macedonia? b. Are there any synergies and inter-linkages between the project and other interventions of UN Women in North Macedonia and the Western Balkan Region?
	External coherence
	7. To what extent is the project aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in North Macedonia?
	8. To what extent the project is in complementarity, harmonized and coordinated with the interventions of external, non-UN interventions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To what extent the implementation of the project ensures synergies and coordination with Government’s and key partners’ relevant efforts while avoiding duplications?
	9. To what extent is in complementarity with other development partners’ interventions?
	10. What is UN Women’s comparative advantage in North Macedonia to implement this project?

Effectiveness	11. To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
	12. How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results? a. How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners? b. To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies innovative for implementation of GRB in North Macedonia? What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of the results?
	13. What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? a. Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom? b. What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome? c. Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) identified in the implementation of the different actions and what level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?
Efficiency	14. Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
	15. Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? a. Where does accountability lie? b. Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
	16. How efficient was the monitoring system? a. To what extent are the project monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? b. To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?
Impact	17. What are the areas of achieved or potential measurable impact of the Project? a. What is the impact on the target groups and beneficiaries at individual, community and institutional/system levels? b. Were there any unintended positive or negative results?
	18. How project impacts or is likely to impact women end beneficiaries and the most vulnerable groups?
Sustainability	19. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out? a. To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance? b. How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits? c. How effectively has project contributed to the establishment of effective partnerships and development of national capacities?
	20. To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?
	21. To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
Gender Equality and Human Rights	22. To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation? a. To what extent HR and gender transformative approaches have incorporated into the design, monitoring and reporting of the project? b. To what extent participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights holders and duty bearers) was maximized in the Project's planning, design, implementation and decision?
	23. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

3.4

ORGANIZATION OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was conducted by two independent evaluators (the **Evaluation Team** - ET) and was completed between May and October 2022.

The evaluation followed a participatory approach that included a twofold management structure: **Evaluation Management Group** (EMG) and **Evaluation Reference Group** (ERG).

Evaluation Management Group was main decision-making body for the evaluation and is composed of UN Women project team members, UN Women North Macedonia Head of Office, and UN Women ECA RO Evaluation Specialist who provided quality assurance support throughout the evaluation process. The EMG was responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and for overseeing the day-to-day business of the evaluation and communication with the Evaluation Team.

Evaluation Reference Group was established to ensure that the evaluation approach is relevant to stakeholders, and to make certain that factual errors or errors of omission or interpretation were identified in evaluation products. The reference group provided input at key stages of the evaluation: preliminary findings and final report.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 RELEVANCE

KEY FINDING 1:

The design of the intervention and its results are of highest relevance to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. They represent an adequate response to the need to improve the lives of women, and men, including vulnerable groups and to promote gender equality; they are in line with needs of governmental stakeholders at national and local levels to develop capacities necessary to perform duties in line with gender sensitive policy making and gender responsive budgeting. The needs of stakeholders were taken into account during the project design whether directly, through consultations, or indirectly, based on the information from previous cooperation.

The Intervention is well designed to address the relevant needs and priorities of the end beneficiaries - women, and men, and vulnerable populations by voicing their rights and needs and addressing the existing gaps that hinder the fulfilment of such rights and needs. More specifically, the intervention's overall objective³⁵ reflects the key elements of the context characterized by some still persisting gender inequalities (as described in the chapter on the context) and gender gaps despite the gradual development of the legal and regulatory framework and policies governing GEEW, including GRB, at both national and local levels.

The intervention logic follows two directions by focusing on increasing the capacities of the institutions and employees of the central and local governance levels in integrating the GRB in the policy planning and budgeting, and on the non-governmental actors to hold both levels of governance accountable in fulfilling their GEEW duties and commitments through planning and implementing gender responsive policies and budgets.

³⁵To improve women's lives and support the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups through systematic and sustainable integration of gender perspective at all stages of national and local policy-making and budgeting processes.

Governmental project partners confirmed that project has the highest relevance for the advancement of gender responsive policies and GRB introduction. The key stakeholders, such as Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and its Department for Equal Opportunities (MoLSP-DEO) and the Ministry of Finance, clearly indicated that the project intervention has a proven relevance for their work on GEEW. Likewise, albeit with a more limited sector policy approach, the intervention proves to be highly relevant for other line ministries in regard to their capacities for gender responsive policy planning and budgeting, which were significantly strengthened thanks to the continued capacity enhancement provided through the project intervention. The latter includes use of the GRB analysis, mainstreaming of gender and strategic planning of selected sectorial programs as well as, most recently, programme-based budgeting introduced with the brand-new Organic Budget Law.

The relevance of the GRB program is by no means high and unquestionable. Despite the fact that the evaluation evidence flags somewhat critical observation by the respondents among the FG of experts/mentors that there has been repetition of the same type of capacity development activities regarding the GM and GRB in 21 "old" plus 10 "new" municipalities, the review of the existing tracking matrices of local programs in the LSGs across diverse sectors indicate that the mentoring approach applied is tailored to the needs of the municipalities. It has been noted that if and when there is a change in the municipal administration and in the municipal councils, efforts are made to adapt the capacity development activities and target the newly elected/appointed staff with yet another round of basic training on the GE and GRB. The councillors, and the coordinators for equal opportunities and other staff, who had already undergone the basic training, are offered advanced trainings in areas such as, for example, gender statistics, gender analysis, program monitoring, etc. Nevertheless, representatives in some local communities interviewed during the evaluation mission pointed out the need to further expand the set of project activities across even more diverse sectors in LSG policy planning, in order to increase relevance for their current state. In particular, they draw attention to the need to improve gender disaggregated data and, moreover, to have organized exchanges between the municipalities aimed at sharing good practices, especially in the area of data collection.

“The relevance of the GRB programme is not questionable. The GRB tools, in particular the training on the GRB has been internalized by the EO coordinators and other women and men in the municipalities through delivered expert training and mentoring services to 21 municipalities that have already piloted GRB initiatives and have the basic capacities and skills to mainstream gender in policies and programs, and to the new 10 municipalities. There has been, however, repetition of the same type of capacity development activities regarding the GM and GRB in the above mentioned (21 plus 10) municipalities, with a menu of the activities which tend to be limited and reflect the activities from the previous project cycles, in particular in 21 “old” municipalities.”

FG composed of experts/mentors

Project relevance was confirmed by CSOs implementing different actions within the project framework – watchdog and mobilization initiatives, as well as by women in targeted local communities who were mobilized through project activities as agents of change. For many women interviewed during the evaluation mission, this was the first opportunity to discuss and express their needs and to engage in the communication with LSG on community policies and investments.

The level of influence, interest and involvement of the key stakeholders has been high at the outset of the Project, during its initial conceptualization and design, while their support to the Project has been of utmost importance. In addition, it needs to be reiterated that the Project builds on series of previous interventions at national and regional level, coupled with the fact that introduction of GRB in national planning and budgeting has been a lengthy and capacity demanding process which started back in 2007. The latest intervention, prior to the start of the current one, has been promoting the Gender Responsive Policies in Southeast Europe and the Republic Moldova Regional Program (2017-2019), covering North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova. These continued efforts of UN Women, at regional and national level, led to accumulation of technical expertise on GEEW, and more specifically in GRB, and building pool of experts in this area. As a follow up and prior to the closing of the regional project, the interviews and consultative meetings with the representatives of the central and local governance levels, Parliament and the CSOs were conducted. As a segment of the consultative planning process, project identification meetings took place involving the key

stakeholder institutions such as the MoLSP and the MoF. The Project identification process was brought to closure with stakeholder planning workshops in 2018 which brought together the technical level representatives including the representatives of the key stakeholder institutions. Since the Public Finance Management Reform has already been launched, the decision was made to initiate the process of final institutionalization of GRB through the ongoing PFM reform. Hence, conceptualization and design of the latest GRB Project included the stakeholder institutions in the process at the outset. Although at somewhat different levels, each of the key stakeholders could stir the Project’s activities and resolve issues/problems as and when they arise.

KEY FINDING 2:

The Project’s design is consistent and highly relevant to the GE priorities of the country, as defined in the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men and National Strategy for Gender Equality, as well as with commitments stemming from ratification of the key international conventions in the area of GEEW, such as CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action, requirements related to EU accession process and GEEW priorities entailed in the Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030.

THE DESIGN OF THE INTERVENTION AND THE GE NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The Project’s design reflects a consolidated strategic framework consisted of the key national priorities for advancing GE, including the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2022-2027), the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2031), the Strategy for Regional Development of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021-2031), and the methodology to guide the country in setting its long-term development vision through formulation of the new National Development Strategy (2023-2040).

Very importantly, the Project’s design supports the Government’s commitment to introducing the gender perspective into the draft Organic Budget Law which has been adopted only recently. More specifically, the Project’s design includes the longstanding efforts aimed at the institutionalization of GRB, which have coincided with the major upcoming public finance reform. In effect, the GRB approach, central to the Project’s design, has gained relevance and visibility in the government strategic and policy agenda, since it has been organically and structurally connected to the respective reform

package, which inter alia, aims to introduce the program based budgeting. Hence, the Project's design captures the Government's commitments to further advance GE and GRB through establishing a direct link between the funding allocated to a program and results to be achieved within the program, and to do that by systemic and sustainable application of GRB at central and local level of governance in the country.

PROJECT'S ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL TREATY SYSTEM

The Project is fully aligned with the international legal and normative framework and extensively contributes to the implementation of international covenants such as CEDAW, Beijing Declaration, Istanbul Convention, EU Gender Equality Strategy, the GE related requirements under the EU accession process, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, in particular those referring to GEEW-SDG 5.1

The Project addresses the recommendations stemming from the CEDAW- Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination (1979). The conclusions of the CEDAW Committee in its country periodic reports³⁶ submitted to the signatory countries, including North Macedonia, identify persisting gender inequalities in various fields and specifically for some groups of women (like those living in rural areas) and other vulnerable groups. Latest recommendations/ conclusions from the CEDAW Committee³⁷, inter alia, call the state party (North Macedonia) to systematically collect data and monitor progress in representation of women in political and public life; under heading about economic empowerment of women, it recommends the state party to allocate additional earmarked funds for increased access of women to microcredits, loans, etc., in particular with respect to rural women, Roma women, migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, etc., and it calls for ensuring Access of rural women to land titles, etc. The next (seventh) periodic review will need to be submitted by the state party in November 2022.

Furthermore, the Project aligns with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its strategic areas on women and economy and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.³⁸

The Project reflects the intended full harmonization of national legal framework with the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) as a landmark international treaty in Europe that criminalizes GBV. By and large, it has been transposed into a new Law on prevention and protection of GBV (2021).

The project is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) signed with the Government for the period 2021-2025, and extensively contributes to the UNSDCF outcomes focused on good governance and inclusive prosperity. It further contributes to the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, "a universal framework for strengthening collective action towards common goals and challenges", making "reduced inequality" and "leave-no-one-behind" environment to be largely the key principles underpinning its activities. The institutional commitments have been pronounced under the SDG 5, in particular to those referring to GEEW, SDG 5.1., with focus on SDG 5.c.1 as an indicator related to progress made towards systematic tracking budget allocations for gender equality. It measures the proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocation for GEEW. This indicator sets an international standard for gender budgeting with capacity to ensure important data for monitoring the progress towards SDG5. UN Women is the responsible agency to report under this target.

KEY FINDING 3:

The Project continues to be the cornerstone for advancing gender equality and implementation of GRB and as such continues to respond to the needs and demands of the key stakeholders for technical and expert support and capacity building at both national and local levels of policymaking and budgeting. With adoption of the Organic Budget Law, the set of bylaws should be adopted and the system fully instituted, for which continued support is needed.

The Project remains to be relevant since it is still fully consistent with the country's strategic and development priorities and with the specific sectors and target groups of women, and men, including vulnerable groups, presented as the main development trajectory and reflected in the Project's original design. There is a persistent commitment to furthering GE and GM at all stages and levels of national and local policymaking and budgeting, strongly supported by the Project. Within such context, GRB continues to be implemented in 13-line ministries and 31 municipalities mainly in policies

³⁶Countries report their progress to the CEDAW Committee every four years

³⁷https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&CountryID=173&DocTypeID=5

³⁸https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf

and budgets in healthcare, labour and employment and socio-economic sectors. In addition, gender perspective is also being introduced to fully deliver the EU commitments on gender equality. Increased capacities of the administration results into imminently stronger role of the national gender machinery, which is gradually enabled to initiate and coordinate reforms for advancing gender equality and GRB.

Moreover, after the adoption of the new Law on the Organic Budget, the Project remains to be the cornerstone of advancing GE and implementing GRB through the concerted efforts of the MoF and other institutions involved in developing the regulatory framework for implementation of the new Law. There is a steady continuation of the capacity development of civil servants, coordinators for equal opportunities within the gender structures, councillors and other staff assigned to the local commissions for equal opportunities. The support of the State Audit Office (SAO) on GRB and gender mainstreaming in auditing practice is at an accelerated pace ensuring even more stable GRB institutionalization.

4.2 COHERENCE

KEY FINDING 4:

The Project fits to a large extent within the UN Women's Strategic Plan(s) 2018-2021 and 2022-2025, which, inter alia, support the member states in promoting the gender-responsive policy planning and budgeting, collection and monitoring of globally representative data on gender, and national efforts to strengthen public finance management systems to track resources for gender equality and allocation of gender-responsive budgets. The Project builds on interlinkages with other similar UN Women supported interventions in the wider region, whereas GE and WE are also advanced through gender responsive financing policies, strategies and instruments.

The Project's underlying theme – promotion of gender responsive policies and budgets (GRB) in North Macedonia, has been one of the UN Women's core strategic thematic priorities, captured by the UN Women strategic plans (2018-2021 and 2022-2025), and a part of its mandate. Consequently, on these grounds, the Project builds its consistency with other actors' interventions in the same context which includes complementarity and coordination with others, while avoiding any duplication of the respective efforts.

At regional level, UN Women has been supporting the governments of several Western Balkan countries – North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania since 2014 in promotion and gradual introduction of GRB. As part of the growing attention to cross-government synergies and coordination, UN Women subsequently implemented interventions at the regional level and in North Macedonia, (2011-2013), (2014-2016), (2017-2018)³⁹ and the current ongoing one, indicating initial progress and success in the gradual development of the legal and regulatory framework and policies governing GRB at both national and local levels, too. They have contributed to implementation of international and national GE commitments by strengthening the capacities of central and local governments to integrate GRB in policy planning and budgeting and of non-governmental actors to hold governments accountable to GE commitments using GRB as a tool.

The existent synergies and interlinkages with other similar projects/programs emerge as a consequence of the fact that North Macedonia, and other countries in the region, have embarked on major public finance reforms, mostly strongly supported by the international financial institutions, the World Bank and the IMF (IFIs), as well as by the EU. These reforms, inter alia, imply gradual transition from the conventional line item budgeting based on inputs and funding for the resources allocated by economic line items, towards program budgeting based on results, where the budget is planned based on outputs. The program budgeting establishes a direct link between the funding allocated to a program and results to be achieved within it, and enables allocation decision to be based on the results, therefore allowing the GRB model to place an emphasis on the inclusion of gender equality aspects into the overall PFM reform. In addition, and not the least, the program budgeting establishes the complementarity and coordination with the interventions by external, or non-UN development partners, such as the IFIs and the EU. The latter opened up the opportunity for active and productive involvement of UN Women jointly with IFIs and EU in policy dialogue with the MoF regarding furthering the work on the PMF reforms in North Macedonia.

UN Women maintains regular coordination and consultation interactions with the UNDP managed project "Empowerment of municipal councils", while the UN Women's representative is a member at the Steering committee of this project. In addition, coordination and harmonization activities are planned to be initiated with bilateral development partners including the NDI and Westminster Foundation.

³⁹ Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe and the Republic of Moldova (2013-2016) and Promoting Gender Responsive Budgeting in South East Europe – Regional Program (2017-2019), covering North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova.

In practice, this means that in North Macedonia and in the Western Balkans, UN Women supports simultaneously projects/programs which increase the capacities of the governance systems essential for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. To achieve these overall objectives, UN-Women provides context-specific policy guidance, technical support and capacity strengthening on the mobilization, allocation and spending of high-impact financing aligned with gender equality objectives.

“Gender Equality is important component of the NALAS’ Strategic plan. In the first phase, NALAS conducts capacity development through training courses, the second stage is piloting in countries of Southeast Europe, and the third phase represents a policy level. The relationship with UN Women is cooperative and partnering rather than relation with a donor agency. UN Women is a true partner in planning and in implementation, with discussing, agreeing and cooperating. NALAS continuously needs the UN Women’s expert support, and this is why it is a long-term one.”

NALAS representative

KEY FINDING 5:

The Project is fully aligned with the two consecutive UN strategic framework documents in support of North Macedonia’s national development priorities, the UN Partnership for Sustainable Development (UN PSD) 2016-2020 and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UN SDCF) 2021-2025.

The overall objective of the UN Women-led intervention has been supported by two UN strategic documents, the UNPSD and the UNSCDF.

Under the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025, the Project directly contributes to O1 and O4, and indirectly to Outcome 2 (through sectoral application of GRB)

Outcome 1: Inclusive prosperity: by the 2025 the living standard of all people in North Macedonia is improved through equal access to decent work and productive employment generated by inclusive and innovative business ecosystem.

Outcome 4: Good governance: By 2025, people in the whole country benefit from improved rule of law; evidence-based, anticipatory and gender-responsive policies; greater social cohesion; and effective service delivery by transparent, accountable and responsive institutions.

The strategic impact of the activities under these SCDF outcomes suggests, at one hand, that UN Women encourages the integrated approach under which relevant authorities and their nongovernmental partners would ensure effective multi-agency cooperation (Outcome 1). Under Outcome 4, UN Women continues with the activities leading to implementation of gender-responsive, age and disability sensitive planning and budgeting as central to the Good governance strategic outcome. The latter assumes enhancement of administrative capacities for gender responsive planning and budgeting, and transposition and implementation of the EU Gender Equality Acquis in national legislation and other related strategic documents.

KEY FINDING 6:

The evaluation evidence indicates that while the Project continuously strengthens the capacities of government initiatives regarding GRB, including coordination of GE mechanism, the complementarity and coordination with the interventions by external, or non-UN development partners, are very limited. The evaluation evidence gathered from desk research, and field interviews, indicate that such situation is due to the lack or insufficient presence of other development partners or other GRB initiatives, at one hand. At another hand, though, close coordination and finding the threads of complementarity with development partners such as EU and international financial institutions (IFIs) – IMF and World Bank and involving UN Women jointly with IFIs in policy dialogue with the MoF regarding the PMF reforms, proves useful and necessary.

The role of this Project, particularly if seen as continuation of a series of UN Women interventions since 2011 onwards, has been critical and catalyst in respect to the gradual development of legal and regulatory framework and policies governing GRB at both national and local levels and in fostering the vertical and horizontal coordination of the GE mechanisms. There is, however, not much evidence of external or non-UN partners or interventions who are implementing GRB.

At the local level, UN Women closely cooperates with UNDP on fiscal decentralization and capacity strengthening local councillors and continues cooperation established previously with ZELS in replication and further expansion of the interventions at the local level. Therefore, there is a sense of complementarity and coordination between the Project and similar interventions on the ground.

On the other hand, at the national level, in respect to the process of GRB institutionalization, there have been observations expressed by several interviewed parties that great opportunity for fostering GM under the Public Finance Management (PFM) reform, and in the support of the Ministry of Finance, is rendered through better pronounced inclusion of gender perspective in the program budgeting. The currently ongoing PFM reform is deemed as a major window of opportunity for systemic integration of GRB into national planning and budgeting.

Therefore, continued close coordination and complementarity with international development partners, such as the EU and the IFIs – IMF and the WB, and even more active involvement of UN Women into the policy dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, in supporting and fostering this reform, may lead to much greater and faster institutionalization of GRB at macro level. After the very recent adoption of the Organic Budget Law (OBL), the pending work on the respective regulatory framework to ensure implementation of the OBL becomes even more relevant for inclusion of the gender perspective in the program budgeting.

KEY FINDING 7:

The evaluation evidence indicates that UN Women's comparative advantage to implement the GRB Project in North Macedonia, derives from its original mandate which is achieving gender equality and women empowerment and support to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda (SDG 5), from its long-term commitment to the gender responsive budgeting interventions at wider regional level, and specifically at national and local government levels in North Macedonia. Their technical expertise on GE and WE and particularly GRB is perceived as unique in current circumstances, which includes capacity to mobilize international and local expertise, to establish linkages among various sectors and policies at central and local level and prioritize them accordingly from the GRB angle, to reach out to women, and men, including the vulnerable population, to CSOs, to smaller grassroots and self-help organizations and groups of women, perceived as neutral and trusted by stakeholders, beneficiaries and development partners.

The evaluation evidence indicates that UN Women's comparative advantage to implement the GRB Project in North Macedonia derives from its original mandate, which is achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and support to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda (SDG 5) from its long-term commitment to the gender responsive budgeting interventions at wider regional level, and specifically at both national and local government levels in North Macedonia.

Although UN Women Office has a status of Program Presence, it has managed to position itself as lead/expert organization in advancing GE and women's human rights agenda. More specifically, the conversion of the macroeconomic standards and priorities into the UN Women's own and specific mandate clearly indicates the comparative advantage of UN Women on these issues compared to other UN entities.

The UN Women's technical expertise on GE and WE and particularly GRB is perceived as unique in current circumstances, which includes capacity to mobilize international and local expertise, to establish linkages among various sectors and policies at central and local level and prioritize them accordingly from the GRB angle, to reach out to women, and men, including the vulnerable population, to CSOs, to smaller grassroots and self-help organizations and groups of women, and while doing that to be perceived as neutral and trusted by stakeholders, beneficiaries and development partners.

“UN Women is an excellent implementation partner. UN Women's slight weakness is in its smaller visibility compared to other organizations, particularly given the competition which is present among the organizations in the field. This minor handicap originates in the fact that they are program based agency in North Macedonia, and when we say program based it means that their presence is dependent on the existence of a program. SIDA needs a strategic partner and UN Women has significant capacity to perform that role.”

From the interview notes with
an international development partner agency

“They are accessible, we can ask anything we need and their response and ensuing support are instant”

From the interview notes with the LSG Sv. Nikole

4.3

EFFECTIVENESS

KEY FINDING 8:

The Project was effectively implemented, results are achieved to the high extent and processes are in many ways advanced, particularly in regard to the awareness of GRB importance, skills and motivation of various stakeholders to apply GRB practices in their work, mobilization of women to request local policies and measures in line with their needs, capacitated and mobilized civil society to promote and safeguard GRB processes. However, delayed adoption of Organic Budget Law and respective bylaws made the achievement of results more challenging.

Target values against which the effectiveness was assessed relate to the original result framework which defines values for the 2018-2022 framework. The reason for not referring to revised result framework which extends the project time frame until the end of 2023 is the lack of possibility to assess and estimate the achievement of results that will occur in the remaining part of the project implementation. The evidence used for the assessment in this section relies







on data from UN Women reporting to donors on the achieved results, other project documents as well as on evidence collected during the evaluation mission from the interviews with various stakeholders.

Main achievements in regard to the outcome 1 are related to the progress in gender mainstreaming national and local level policies,⁴⁰ increased sensitivity of policy measures to the needs of women, which is evidenced by the growing number of gender specific or gender sensitive measures introduced by local self-governments and at the central level ministries, but the key challenges are linked to the project components that are strongly linked to the adoption of the Organic Budget Law and respective bylaws and establishment of the GRB institutional mechanisms, such as the system to track budgetary allocations for gender equality. Due to postponement of the adoption of the Organic budget law, the integrating gender perspective in budgeting had to rely mainly on the willingness and capacities of relevant stakeholders.

In regard to the outcome 2, the achievement of results is more effective as the dynamics at local level appears to be more visible: LSGs are more aware of GRB and ready to introduce measures based on the needs of women (36 new gender specific or sensitive measures were brought by LSGs and more than 50 women and vulnerable groups benefited from gender sensitive measures), while women are more proactive and coordinated to request measures that will improve their lives in their respective communities, and CSOs mobilization, awareness raising, advocacy and watchdog initiatives (more than 60) resulted in more responsive budget planning, introduction of measures that directly benefited women in local communities and in activities through which newly achieved GRB local processes were safeguarded.

⁴⁰ At the national level this includes National Strategy on Gender Equality (2021-2026) which was developed with contribution of the project, as well as National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2027), Strategy for Regional Development of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021-2031), National Programme for regional development (2021-2024), 6 newly adopted local strategies for gender equality in the municipalities of Ohrid, Bitola, the City of Skopje, Kochani, Shtip, Aerodrom.

TABLE 3:
SCORING EFFECTIVENESS BY RESULT FRAMEWORK – OUTCOME LEVEL INDICATORS

Effectiveness at outcome level			
Outcomes	Indicators and target values by 2022	Finding	
Outcome 1: The Government's public finance management and the strategic planning processes respond to the different needs of women and men through effective application of gender responsive budgeting	Indicator 1.1: Number of adopted or amended PFM legislation and government strategic planning documents that integrate gender perspective. Target value: at least 3	Organic budget law, National Strategy on GE and National Strategy for Agriculture have been adopted.	
	Indicator 1.2: System in place to track budgetary allocations for gender equality (directly responding to SDG indicator 5.c1.) Target value: a system in place to track budgetary allocations for gender equality	There is no system in place.	
	Indicator 1.3: # of national and local strategies and sectoral policies that integrate gender equality priorities. Target values: a) at least 4 new national sectoral strategies b) at least 10 new local strategies or sectoral policies	Exceeded the planned results as more than targeted number of national and local strategies with relevance to gender equality and/or gender mainstreamed were adopted.	
Outcome 2: Civil society organizations, women, including the most vulnerable, actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and benefit from public policies and budgets.	Indicator 2.1: # of initiatives for budget monitoring (gender budget watchdog reports), advocacy and outreach /empowerment of women taken by civil society organizations and women, including the most vulnerable groups. Target value: at least 60 initiatives	Exceeded planned result as 67 initiatives were taken by CSOs and women, including most vulnerable (4 in 2019, 10 in 2020 and 23 in 2021).	
	Indicator 2.2: # of measures funded by local self-government units to respond to priorities and needs voiced by women during participatory processes. Target value: at least 20 new measures	Exceeded as 36 measures have been funded by LSGs to respond to priorities and needs voiced by women	
	Indicator 2.3: # of beneficiaries (women and vulnerable groups) receiving direct support through municipal interventions and funds allocated for their empowerment Target value: at least 50 beneficiaries	Exceeded as 53 women and vulnerable groups have received direct support through municipal interventions.	

Outputs related to the outcome 1 were achieved to a large extent with few gaps. According to the project monitoring reports, the MoF has developed capacity to introduce gender perspective in the programme budgeting as part of the public management reform (output 1.1). However, information obtained through interviews indicated that despite the fact that planned number of central budget users were trained for GRB and planned number of citizen's budgets were developed by the MoF, technical staff of the MoF has reported that despite intensive capacity building activities and development of guidelines and tools that can help the staff to apply new methods of budgeting, they still do not feel sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to apply GRB systematically. They expressed expectations that with the new law and future bylaws, procedures and methods would be further established, and they expect that they will obtain proper support to learn these new methods of budgeting. According to their experience, the budget users are still insufficiently capable of applying gender sensitive budgeting as per request of the MoF budget instruction, which should be in the focus of future capacity building initiatives. According to their opinions, one of the key reasons for still insufficient capacities was the absence of the law and bylaws that would institutionalize GRB and pose obligations for all budget users. In the absence of law (which was adopted in the last six months of the project), the development of capacities and application of GRB was dependent on willingness of stakeholders, their motivation and commitment which is quite uneven among different budget users.

For the same reasons, LSGs are only partly able to apply GRB (output 1.3). As it was indicated by LSG representatives, in some municipalities budgeting is introduced through specific gender equality programs, but not present as gender mainstreamed sectoral policies. Some specific budget line would be allocated to GEEW goal, but it is still not possible to plan and trace GEEW allocations throughout the whole local budget. Only few municipalities managed to mainstream gender throughout the whole annual budget.

Higher effectiveness is recorded in regard to the capacities of National Gender Machinery to apply GM and GRB (output 1.2). This is supported by the establishment of the Resource Centre on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting that serves and will serve as a hub for the capacity development of relevant stakeholders to embark on the GRB processes.

Another output with modest achievement was the one related to the engagement of Members of Parliament (MPs) (output 1.4). Unfortunately, the evaluation mission was conducted during the period of citizens protests related to work of the Parliament and challenging period for parliamentary activities, so it was not possible to shed more light on this line of the project from their sources. The adoption of the Organic Budget Law in September 2022 during political tensions related to other issues was rather pleasant surprise for evaluation team.







“At the central government level, the gender programs are not designed upfront as in the case of the LSGUs, but rather the existent programs are engendered. There has been a constant increase of budget users who apply programs with an integrated gender dimension, although not all of their programs are covered. For example, such gender sensitive planned and budgeted programs are executed at the ministries of Agriculture, forestry and water economy, Defence, Health, Culture, Justice, Environment, etc., and to that end they use the budget circular. In fact, the budget circular requires the budget users to introduce and integrate the gender component. Not all of the budget users, however, know exactly how to practically apply GRB in the entire planning and budgeting processes and therefore they need more training.”

Representatives of the Ministry of Finance

TABLE 4:
SCORING EFFECTIVENESS BY RESULT FRAMEWORK – OUTPUT INDICATORS WITHIN OUTCOME 1

Effectiveness at output level – Outcome 1			
Outputs	Indicators and targets by 2022	Finding	
Output 1.1: MoF has the capacity to introduce gender perspective in the programme budgeting, as part of the Public Finance Management Reform	Indicator 1.1.1: Number of adopted or amended PFM legislation and government strategic planning documents that integrate gender perspective. Target value: at least 5	Four initiatives/proposals were taken by public officials for introducing gender perspective in programme budgeting documents.	
	Indicator 1.1.2: # of central budget users (line ministries/state institutions) that have capacities to introduce gender-responsive programme-based budgeting Target value: at least 10 central budget users	Achieved. However, although more than planned number of ministries and state institutions (according to the 2021 report to donor – 15) have strengthened their capacities for gender mainstreaming in sectoral programmes and budgets and the concept of programme-based budgeting, the evaluation evidence indicates that stakeholders frequently indicate that they still don't have full capacities to apply GRB.	
	Indicator 1.1.3: # of gender-sensitive citizen's budgets developed and published by the MoF Target value: at least 2	Achieved as Citizen's Budget was developed and published by the MoF for 2021 and 2022.	
Output 1.2: National Gender Machinery (NGM) has enhanced capacities to lead and oversee gender responsive policy-making and budgeting of line-ministries and state institutions	Indicator 1.2.1: # targeted sectoral strategies and programmes which integrate gender equality under the leadership of the NGM Target value: 10	Achieved and exceeded as 13 targeted sectoral programmes were gender mainstreamed under the leadership of NGM.	
	Indicator 1.2.2: # Non-existent mechanism for continued capacity development and knowledge sharing on GRB Target value: 1 Resource Centre on GRB established	Achieved, Resource centre is established and functional.	
	Indicator 1.2.3: # specific budgetary allocations in selected sectoral programmes ⁴¹ that address the needs of women and the most vulnerable Target value: 4	Achieved and exceeded as 13 specific budgetary allocations were made in sectoral programmes, out of which 4 address the needs of vulnerable women.	

⁴¹ Focus will be placed on the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Self-Governance

<p>Output 1.3: Local governments are able to apply GRB tools to analyse, plan and bring about budgetary decisions which respond to the needs of women and men, including the most vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Indicator 1.3.1: # of local officials are able to apply GRB tools in the overall policy and budgetary processes.</p> <p>Target value: at least 500 local officials</p>	<p>Achieved as more than 500 local officials have strengthened their capacities to apply GRB in the overall policy and budgetary processes.</p>	
	<p>Indicator 1.3.2: # of local programmes with gender specific objectives and budget allocations</p> <p>Target value: 20</p>	<p>Achieved and highly exceeded as 87 local programmes have gender specific objectives and budget allocations.</p>	
	<p>Indicator 1.3.3: # of local self-government units mainstreaming gender in the entire municipal budget</p> <p>Target value: 3</p>	<p>Partly achieved as only one municipality up to date fully integrated gender equality in the entire municipal budget.</p>	
<p>Output 1.4: Members of Parliament take initiatives to monitor and advocate for gender responsive policies and budgets.</p>	<p>Indicator 1.4.1: # of MPs trained on using GRB tools to monitor policies and budgets</p> <p>Target value: 50</p>	<p>Partly achieved as 37 MPs have been trained on using GRB tools to monitor policies and budgets.</p>	
	<p>Indicator 1.4.2: # of advocacy initiatives taken by MPs to address gender-specific gaps in policies</p> <p>Target value: at least 10 advocacy initiatives</p>	<p>Achieved and exceeded as 15 advocacy initiatives were taken by MPs to address gender-specific gaps in policies.</p>	
	<p>Indicator 1.4.3: # of analytical and research gender-related papers produced by Parliamentary Institute in support of the advocacy works of MPs</p> <p>Target value: at least 3</p>	<p>Achieved as 3 analytical and research gender related papers were produced by Parliamentary Institute.</p>	

Output level results related to the outcome 2 reveal ‘greener’ picture, with more effective achievement of results related to the capacities and engagement of CSOs in mobilizing, coordinating women (output 2.1), organizing watchdog initiatives, while at the same time local administration participates in trainings for GRB and regional initiatives enable exchange of experiences in introducing GM and GRB in local policy and budgeting processes based on the needs of local women (output 2.2).






Evidence gathered during the evaluation mission is compatible with results obtained through regular monitoring of the project implementation, presented in the reports to donors. Visit to local communities, particularly Struga and Demir Kapija revealed the picture of very active, motivated and committed women and local grass-root organization played a great role in their mobilization for more gender responsive local policies and budgets. Through the project support, CSOs also increased their capacities

to act as GRB watchdogs. The evaluation evidence points also to the achieved targets in regard to development of capacities of local governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders for production and use of gender sensitive data needed for GM of local policies and GRB. However, interviewed representatives of LSGs have indicated that this only opened the issue of gender sensitive data and that

it is needed to do much more in future in order to provide gender disaggregated data in all relevant policy areas.

Regional exchange was another line of activities related to the output 2.2, and evidence gathered during evaluation mission found that stakeholders highly appreciate such exchanges.

TABLE 5:
SCORING EFFECTIVENESS BY RESULT FRAMEWORK – OUTPUT INDICATORS WITHIN OUTCOME 2

Effectiveness at output level – Outcome 2			
Outputs	Indicator	Finding	
Output 2.1: Women, including the most vulnerable groups, are empowered to voice their needs and act as agents of change in planning and budgeting processes.	Indicator 2.1.1: # CSOs capacitated to reach out and encourage women and vulnerable groups to participate in planning and budgeting processes. Target value: at least 20	Achieved and exceeded as 24 CSOs have been capacitated to empower women and vulnerable groups to participate in planning and budgeting processes.	
	Indicator 2.1.2: # of women, including the most vulnerable groups, participating in outreach and empowerment actions ⁴² to voice their needs and priorities Target value at least 4000 new women	Partly achieved with 3589 women, including the most vulnerable, have participated in outreach and empowerment actions to voice their needs and priorities.	
Output 2.2: Civil Society Organizations have the capacities to formulate evidence-based policy analyses and effectively advocate for gender responsive planning and budgeting.	Indicator 2.2.1: # of gender budget watchdog initiatives carried out by CSOs Target value: 30	Achieved as 32 gender budget watchdog initiatives were carried out by CSOs.	
	Indicator 2.2.2: # of key state and non-state actors trained on gender data and statistics Target value: a) at least 60 state actors b) at least 30 non-state actors	Achieved, as 65 local administration representatives have strengthened their capacities to produce and use gender sensitive data and statistics.	
	Indicator 2.2.3: # of regional initiatives for exchange of knowledge and best practices on GRB Target value: 20	Achieved as 22 regional initiatives for exchange of knowledge and best practices on GRB were implemented.	

⁴²Empowerment Actions are CSO local initiatives aimed at reaching out to women and raising awareness about the impact of policy and budget making on their lives, increase their capacities and knowledge on budgetary processes and encourage them to take actions to voice their needs and bring change at local level.

KEY FINDING 9:

The overall approach of the project was to combine diverse strategies targeting in appropriate way different stakeholders which participate in the GRB processes directly or indirectly in order to foster introduction and implementation of GRB at different levels from 'all sides'. Providing tools for GM and GRB, capacity building for GRB, mobilization and coordination of women to be able to articulate their interest and lobby for their needs in LSGs, monitoring local budgeting processes, mutual learning and exchange of experience, appeared as successful project strategies.

The overall approach of the project was to simultaneously support various stakeholders to perform their roles in regard to GRB in appropriate ways: national and local governments to introduce and implement GRB, budget users to be requested to plan their budgets in line with new instructions, NGOs to be able to support mobilization of women as active citizens as well as GRB watchdogs, and women to become active citizens who require local budgets planning in line with their needs and who are able to influence and monitor budgeting processes. This complex multi-beneficiary and multi-strategy approach was implemented using different strategies.

Improvement of legislation. The project has played important role in drafting the Organic Budget Law. The expert support organized for the UN Women project was important. Many amendments to the draft law were proposed during this cooperation. As already mentioned, the Law has been recently adopted.

Improvement of GRB related rules and procedures. Development and use of GRB methodologies, guidelines and tools enabled standardization of procedures and enabled stakeholders to easily learn and apply these procedures. In 2021 the Ministry of Finance introduced a novelty in the Budget Circular, requiring budget users to plan for budgetary allocations for six years instead of the initial three, when submitting the proposed gender responsive budget initiatives. The specific template provides guidance to line ministries on the submission and reporting on their gender responsive budget initiatives (programme, planned resources and expected results). Some ministries and other budget users adequately apply these new rules and procedures and include gender component (gender responsive measures) in their programmes. As good examples were indicated in the programme for rural development of the Ministry of Agriculture,

programmes of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, in cooperation with UN Women, mainstreamed gender in the new National Strategy for agriculture and Rural Development (2021-2027). The Strategy for the first time considers the needs of women in rural areas and provides overview of the key gender gaps in agriculture and rural development. In 2021 the Ministry of Defence included measures for increase of women in army and increased sensitization of professional soldiers on gender equality. The Ministry of Culture devoted 10% of their annual budget to improvement of gender sensitive data in the sector of culture and promotion of gender equality in the culture. The Ministry of Education allocated 9% of their annual budget to promotion of gender equality in education system and elimination of gender stereotypes in education programmes.⁴³ However, according to the experience of representatives of the MoF, many institutions do not respect the procedure and do not include GRB component. In the absence of legal obligation they can do so, despite the ministry budget instruction.

Capacity building for GM and GRB of governmental stakeholders at central and local levels was one of the crucial strategies. It was implemented through trainings, mentoring, exchange, using various tools. The effectiveness of the capacity building strategy was enhanced by combination of multiple capacity building activities. Based on the awareness that one training is not enough, the capacity building strategy was grounded in the conviction that coaching and mentoring should complement trainings in order to provide continuous support to stakeholders to perform GRB throughout all stages. As experts performing mentoring support to municipalities explained, in cases when there was insufficient capacity of LSGs for the analysis of local policies and programmes, the municipalities relied on identification and articulation of the needs by the experts/mentors who ensured that these needs are translated into policy actions and measures, that they were placed in the municipal procurement plans for the respective service delivery, and finally were handed over to the citizens for their review and adoption. The experts/mentors led the training and mentoring process in the municipalities and ensured the work among the experts was synchronized and well-coordinated.

However, respondents have reported on the further need to increase capacities, particularly in regard to gender disaggregated data production and use during policy planning and GRB, specific knowledge

⁴³Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, UN Women, Gender Responsive Budgeting

on gender equality in some of the areas that are not traditionally included in the gender equality agenda. Stakeholders are aware that after the adoption of the Organic Budget Law, and introduction of respective bylaws, they will need additional capacity building for implementation of specific rules and procedures as well as methodologies introduced by this new regulatory framework.

Trainings are not enough. There should be support in implementation and learning. There are too many laws that we have to know. The (GRB) training was great, but you forget over time. From time to time the knowledge should be refreshed and improved with new trainings.

Representative of one of the ministries

Mobilization, networking and coordination of women

in order to articulate their needs and interests for which they can lobby their LSGs. Evaluation evidence points to the very high relevance and effectiveness of such strategies. Both CSOs and women highly appreciated the opportunity to gather, to learn through workshops about local policy making and budgeting processes, to be able to discuss their needs and priorities and to act in coordinated ways. As very positive were evaluated capacity building workshops and networking activities. On the weakness side, civil society interlocutors emphasized that for better effectiveness it would be needed to organize longer workshops, to organize more joint activities of women mobilized through the project and to have more time to implement projects as the dynamic was very dense with relatively short project time frame. This is particularly important for vulnerable women, as they need more time to overcome the gender stereotypes and to accept proactive role in local community life.

“It is needed to work more with rural women, they more slowly overcome gender stereotypes, and they need more time. Among them, there are women with disabilities, victims of violence, ethnic minorities...For example, women in Turkish mahala require different approach, and we need to include women influential in their communities so their work can be accepted in such communities. That requires time.”

Representative of women’s organization

Supporting CSOs acting as GRB watchdogs was another important strategy. The evaluation evidence points to good cooperation between UN Women and organizations who implemented this project component. The flexibility and responsiveness of the UN Women team have contributed to the effectiveness of this strategy as indicated by NGO respondents. Namely, based on their previous experience, organizations decided to apply new strategy, partnering women and other local organizations, which proved very effective (described more under innovative strategies below).

Exchange of experiences between stakeholders.

Representatives of LSGs, CSOs and women emphasized that exchange of experience simultaneously contributes to learning, encouragement and positive competition in promoting needs oriented local GRB. National level stakeholders also emphasized the importance of exchanging experience with other countries and learning from the countries which have advanced systems of GRB. However, the study visits are estimated as limited to very narrow circles and short and it was emphasized that some longer study visit where the key staff implementing budget planning and supervision should be supported to be able to spend some time in MoF of other country/ies and be able to learn throughout all the budgeting process with more technical details and full procedures. While there is dynamic horizontal exchange between LSGs, between CSOs and women, evaluation evidence points to little exchange between project activities at national and local levels. Some national stakeholders reported the lack of information on the project activities at local level, and vice versa. This information should be taken into account having in mind that UN Women has been reported on the project activities and achievements in various ways: through UNSDCF joint annual work plan which is presented to all government stakeholders, regular communication with government partners and public sharing of project information through social media.

Stakeholders indicated also the importance of regional exchange of experience between national gender equality mechanisms, where countries implementing regional GRB project have the opportunity to discuss achievements, challenges and strategies for effective introduction and implementation of GRB. One of the important forms of this regional exchange of best practices among LSGs is led by NALAS, which also has the working group consisting of women’s mayors, which provides particular contribution to the processes of advancing gender mainstreaming of local policies and budgets.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

Some of the implemented strategies were innovative and enabled more effective achievement of results using non-traditional approaches. Increased capacities and leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's (MoLSP) Department for Equal Opportunities resulted into its stronger role as the National Gender Machinery tasked with initiating and coordinating reforms for advancing gender equality. To that effect, the **Resource Centre** on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting has been established, the first of the kind in the region. Resource centre is now under jurisdiction of the MoLSP. It is aimed to serve as a knowledge hub, facilitating continued, systematic and sustainable capacity development of public administration at central and local level in gender responsive policy making and budgeting, as the main target group determined by a Government decree. The adoption of the new Organic Budget Law and pending work on designing the bylaws which will, inter alia, implement specifically the OBL's provisions regarding GE, and GRB, actualizes even more the skills and expertise which the Resource centre is to promote. While the Resource centre has excellent premises and is very well equipped in terms of the office technology and supplies, the staffing presents a challenge, given that the Resource centre still relies on the employees from the MoLSP. These employees perform their duties at the Resource centre on top of the work assigned to them as regular employees of the MoLSP. The latter points out the need for adoption of a new organizational chart for the MoLSP, including the Resource Centre as its organizational part/unit, which will reflect the respective capacity development activities including training courses and expertise requirements and options assigned under the Resource Centre's mandate.

Another innovative strategy was establishing and **supporting partnership between academia and government**, namely the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and the Ministry of Agriculture with the aim to provide the highest expertise in creation of gender sensitive support measures for agriculture. The authority of academia was used for advocacy at the Ministry to design measure 115⁴⁴ in line with the needs and capacities of women engaged in agriculture. Even so, this initial cooperation evolved to establishment of the multi-stakeholder working group which created new forms of partnerships that were not only effective for the design of measure 115 in line with robust evidence provided by the academia partners, but also created ground for future close cooperation and better

44 The measure 115 included two forms of financial support: for purchase of equipment for agricultural production or purchase of services for development of agricultural business (for example marketing), for registered farms with active women producers.

tailoring measures and policies for agriculture and rural development that are gender sensitive and empower women in rural areas who still make a significant portion of population in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Innovative strategy was evidenced by **GRB Watchdog organizations** which performed their role through 'mixed partnerships'. In monitoring local budgets, watchdog organizations were organized in the way that women's organizations were partnered with other developmental and thematic organizations, such as environmental, human rights organizations, etc. The reason for such approach, as explained by the implementing organizations, was to strengthen authority of women's organizations which are often not influential outside the 'women's issues' (for example, violence against women, women's health) and were not taken 'seriously' in other policy areas and topics by the local self-governments. On the other hand, local developmental, environmental or HR organizations, had more experience and often higher authority for different policy areas in the eyes of LSGs, though they most often lack gender sensitive approach. Therefore, through partnering local women's organizations with these organizations enabled mutual learning and increasing capacities for policies and budgeting processes in different policy areas among WROs and, on the other hand, on gender equality and women's rights among other organizations. The strategy is operationalized through several stages: work starts with the assessment of capacities of NGOs, based on that the training was organized, followed by the mentoring. Topic which will be in the focus of budget monitoring is proposed and selected in mutual agreement, baseline report was prepared with support of the coordinating NGO, and advocacy plan was developed. Each monitoring report is designed not only to trace budget spending, but also to identify gaps between planned and implemented expenditures and to compare it to the needs of the target group (whether sufficient or not). Based on that recommendations are produced. The approach is assessed as constructive, NGOs are placed in position not to act only as critics of LSG and national government, but also as partners demonstrating robust evidence how budgeting can be improved.

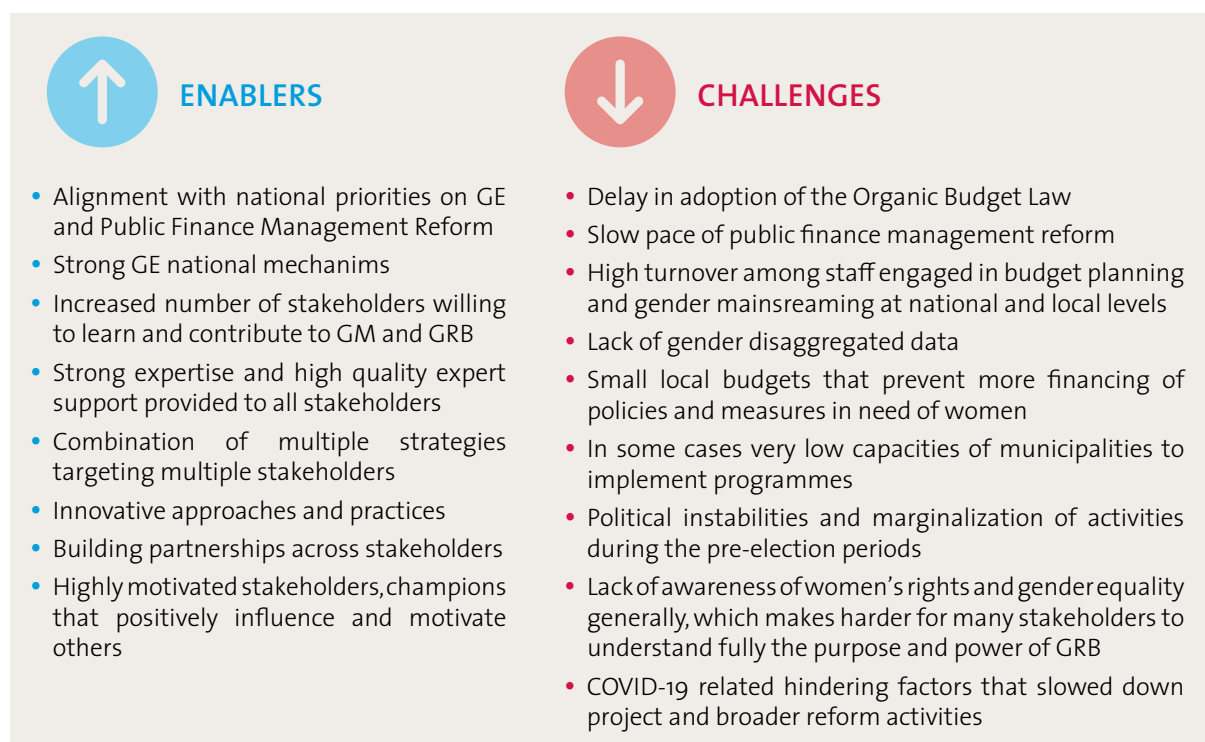
Another example of innovative strategy is the **ZELS digital platform** which is important GRB resource for municipalities⁴⁵ It was developed in partnership between UN Women and ZELS. Municipalities can find here relevant information, including appointed local GRB coordinators, links, and data. Municipalities have access to administration of the platform, so they can upload relevant gender disaggregated data. However, there are still only few municipalities which have such data.

45 ROB – Платформа за родово одговорно буџетирање (zels.org.mk)

KEY FINDING 10:

Factors that contributed to the project effectiveness are alignment with national priorities and increased willingness of stakeholders to learn and contribute to GM and GRB, high expertise in GM and GRB of UN Women and experts they engaged who provided strong support to stakeholders, effective and innovative strategies and approaches, partnerships and presence of highly motivated stakeholders. The hindering factors are mainly related to the delayed legal reform, political instability and high turnover in ministries and LSGs, weak capacities of local GE mechanisms, lack of funds and very low capacities for implementation of programs in some municipalities, lack of gender disaggregated data and still overly prevailing gender stereotypes, and COVID-19 related restrictions.

Evaluation evidence points out that enablers are mainly related to the project relevance, design, expertise of the UN Women team and experts engaged, and some highly motivated and enthusiastic beneficiaries. On the other hand, challenges are mainly related to the external factors, such as slow pace of public finance reform, structural long-lasting factors and COVID-19 related obstacles.

**FIGURE 9:
ENABLERS AND CHALLENGES OF ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES****ENABLERS**

Alignment with national priorities related to gender equality and public finance management reform was one of the preconditions for the success of the project and one of the important enablers of its effectiveness. This alignment gave legitimacy to the project and obligation of the governmental stakeholders to get on board with the project activities, which was seen as a part of the broader reform.

Strong expertise of UN Women for the GRB issue was many times emphasized during the evaluation mission. It appears that UN Women brought that agenda to the Republic of North Macedonia and through previous and current project managed to provide crucial expert support to all relevant stakeholders. Support of GRB experts and mentors engaged by UN Women was highly positively evaluated by various local and national stakeholders. Their role was crucial in getting the knowledge and skills and ability to transfer that

knowledge into GRB practices. However, some critical observations were recorded during the evaluation mission in this regard. Among governmental stakeholders at all levels certain dissatisfaction was reported regarding the fact that GRB expertise is mainly ascribed to the consultants and NGOs. Now they feel empowered, and they would like to see more recognition of their expertise, which means that they feel able to further deliver trainings to others about GM and GRB. UN Women is aware of certain tensions between some governmental stakeholders at national and local level and experts/consultants, and it was testing different strategies with the aim to reconcile conflicting views and interests. The team is exploring different modalities of cooperation, because it is convinced that cooperation should continue, as this is the only way to build up overall capacities for GRB, since no single entity has full expertise.

Another positive factor was the approach and combination of previously described project strategies. The simultaneous targeting of all stakeholders from national government to local women and employment of diverse strategies from changing the legal environment, defining methodologies and tools through capacity building to networking, mobilizing and supervising public finance, has created synergy that contributed to the effective achievement of results. Capability to provide innovative solutions was based on the lessons learned from previous GRB project cycles and brought good results.

Various partnerships contributed to the effective achievement of results. The examples include partnership between the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food - Skopje and the Ministry of Agriculture, which enabled merging the academic expertise of the field with policy-making power; the partnership between large, professional and small, grassroot civil society organizations, which enabled linking the expertise and advocacy with action, or partnership among local women in order to articulate and jointly advocate their own needs. However, some interviewed stakeholders indicated that some additional partnerships could contribute to the more effective achievement of results, particularly in the area of slow public finance management reform. Being aware of difficulties related to the legal reforms in the Republic of North Macedonia, particularly due to political instabilities and shifting priorities, they suggested to explore opportunities for building partnerships with International Financial Institutions in order to provide more concerted pressure on national institutions to complete the legal reform.

Finally, success in achievement of the results should be accredited to the outstanding stakeholders who expressed high motivation, commitment and readiness not only to align or improve their own performance in GRB area, but also to motivate or

request it from other stakeholders. Such stakeholders could be found in different beneficiary groups. For example, some women became informal group leaders that were motivating, mobilizing other women in local communities. Some LSGs showed higher commitments than others, providing good examples for other municipalities to follow. Among national institutions, the institution of State Audit Agency is an example of highly committed stakeholder that introduced GRB in their work to a great extent, creating pressure on other stakeholders and subjects of state audit to do the same.

CHALLENGES

Hindering factors appear in the form of delayed or slowed reform, particularly as delay of adoption of the Organic Budget Law. Seeing that the Organic Budget Law has been adopted, the effectiveness depends on the willingness of stakeholders, their political will to engage in the process of drafting the regulatory framework, which once completed will create grounds for smooth implementation of the GRB processes, as they will be set within the newly endorsed normative framework.

However, almost all stakeholders emphasized the lack of law as one of the most important hindering factors. Still, there have been opinions that importance of the law is sometimes overemphasized and that more balanced view on different factors should be taken into account.

“We place too much hope in the law. The law will contribute to GRB and GM, but it will not lead to it by itself. It is a process that will last for years. What is good is that there are visible results of certain policies and pressure from various groups of civil society and experts to do GRB. To monitor them, to see if they spent the funds or not. We now have a combination of line and program budgets. Some gender-specific initiatives are visible. But frankly, we cannot see gender perspective in sectoral programs. Let’s take an example of a voucher for ICT education. There you can track how many of these measures were available to women or men. But such programs can be followed even without a program budget law. You can see if you are looking for data, there is free access to information. The law will contribute, for sure, but will not lead automatically to dramatic progress. On the contrary, we have to work with institutions, with all sectors and define important indicators for each sector...”

Representative of expert community

Political challenges and high turnover of the staff in LSGs and ministries created various obstacles to the project implementation and achievement of results. In 2021 this was due to the renewed majority and restructuring of the Government, which included the change of the minister of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and part of the staff previously employed in the Ministry. Second half of the year was marked by the local elections. The attention of local governmental stakeholders was fully occupied by electoral issues and it was very difficult to motivate them to participate in the project activities with appropriate commitment. High fluctuation of staff in LSGs was also hindering factor responsible for limited capacities of local officials to perform GRB, but it was also a factor behind weak potential of local GE mechanisms which should play important role in promoting GRB in their LSGs. The experts providing mentoring support to municipalities emphasized differences in effectiveness depending on the level of development of the municipalities and the context including politicization of municipal administration, frequent elections, partisanship of municipal councils, lack of capacity and political will for GE and GRB. They pointed out the frequent changes which occur at the local governments, causing reshuffle of municipal administration as challenging. In the municipalities where there were no changes, GM and GRB are systematically and smoothly conducted.

Lack of gender disaggregated data needed for the needs assessment and budget planning, was particularly emphasized by local stakeholders in local communities, as well as lack of funds in LSGs that can be allocated for programmes and measures responding to women's needs. In some cases very low capacities of municipalities to implement programmes is another factor creating obstacles for effective implementation of the project activities and achievement of results.

Another set of obstacles is related to the **lack of awareness of women's rights and gender equality**, which makes harder for many stakeholders to understand fully the purpose and power of GRB. This lack of gender awareness was also notified by implementing NGOs among women who were beneficiaries in the municipalities. They reported that women in local communities often use GRB tool for advocating the needs that are not gender specific or not gender transformative, such as infrastructure. Or, for example, it is systematic that women will advocate pedestrian walks for easier access of mothers with strollers, but not for the measures related to redistribution of family responsibilities between mothers and fathers. In a sense, these measures were more accommodative than transformative. Regardless, women increased participation and voice in local planning and budgeting processes and their authentic needs for life improvement should also

be respected. In addition, here should also be noted contribution of the project to mainstream gender in sectors that are not traditionally recognized as the area of gender equality and empowerment of women, such as infrastructure, communal affairs, etc.

COVID-19 related hindering factors. The evaluation mission did not find any particularly adverse direct impact of COVID-19 on project activities. The project continued to be implemented during the restrictive government measures in response to pandemic. Capacity building activities and meetings were implemented in online format enabling the completion of all planned activities, although not without complications as after some time online fatigue became present among stakeholders. It can be said that the impact was more indirect, due to the additional slowdown of reform processes.

UNFORESEEN RESULT

Inclusion of the State Audit Agency came later in the project implementation and the scale of success was one of the main unforeseen positive results.

4.4 EFFICIENCY

KEY FINDING 11:

Financial resources were strategically allocated to achieve planned results. However, due to the nature of long-term investments, it is not yet possible to fully estimate the cost effectiveness of the project. It will be needed to continue follow-up on results in the light of spent resources.

The Project was planned originally to be implemented from October 2018 to end of September 2022, but it was extended to end of September 2023 with additional 2,500,000 SEK. The funds of around 3 million of USD were strategically allocated in the way that enabled achievement of planned results. Although this Evaluation is not a financial audit nor cost-benefit analysis, it is important to note that basic observations of resource allocations indicate positive results. The funds were allocated to the planned activities, and no major budget re-allocations were made during the implementation. At the onset of the pandemic in 2020, a contingency plan was developed along with a risk mitigation strategy and some budget-revisions were made to respond to emerging needs of women and the most vulnerable and to support gender analyses of the impact of

COVID-19. This budget revision did not impact the implementation of activities foreseen in the project document and did not impact the achievement of the respective project outputs.

The Project budget was executed in line with the annual work plans as approved by UN Women and donors, and the funds allocated under each Output were sufficient for implementation of activities. Where savings were made the same have been used for expanding the interventions, e.g. additional training workshops, more days of mentoring, etc.

Due to shifting to online training modality during the COVID-19 restrictions, savings were made from budget lines for capacity development. The same savings were used to conduct the Rapid Gender Assessment in 2020. In addition, upon request by the MLSP and Government, UN Women re-phased the savings under the project to support the needs of the most severely affected by the pandemic - i.e. provided emergency packages to single-parent families beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum income and registered survivors of GBV, out of which majority are women. The intervention was implemented as a part of the Rapid response during the crisis, in cooperation with the Red Cross and the Centres for Social Work-MLSP.

Overall, the Project had very good delivery rates and demonstrated readiness to adjust to the new normality caused by COVID-19. The budget planning was done accurately and based on existing market prices, which have substantively changed over the last 2 years. Therefore, the next budget planning cycle should be based on updated market research, renewed capacity assessment of partners' absorption capacities.

KEY FINDING 12:

Management and leadership of the project were very effective – the management team has high capacities to plan, organize and monitor project implementation, to coordinate various stakeholders, provide good communication within the team and between different partners and implementing stakeholders. The challenges, including those related to COVID-19, were addressed with high professionalism and success.

The overall management responsibility and administration of the project rest with the UN Women Republic of North Macedonia Programme Presence, supported technically by the Regional Office of UN Women for Europe and Central Asia. The UN Women Country Office team provided overall technical, programmatic and operational

management of the project, as well as oversight and quality assurance for project implementation and administration support. The project team included one country Programme Analyst, two project coordinators, Operations Associate, administrative assistant and Communications officer.

Evaluation evidence indicates that the management of the project and functioning of the project team were organized in highly professional and effective manner. From human resources perspective, the UN Women implementation team demonstrates a high level of expertise in the area of GM and GRB, well developed relations with partners and other stakeholders included in the project implementation, good knowledge of the local context and ability to recognize opportunities, but also to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and to fast develop mitigation strategies to any emerging challenges which are not rare in the country and broader region. Effective project management was, among other things, facilitated by familiarity of the government procedures and working methods, and past experience in working with national and local governments.

Project Advisory Board was established as supervisory and quality assurance body, and available documents and interviews indicate good management practices which succeeded in using the PAB resources in useful ways for project implementation.

Project partners reported that coordination and communication with the UN Women management team was very good. Sub-grating implementing organizations reported on many good aspects of cooperation with the management team:

- The procedures to apply were clear and simple
- Organizations were left to implement activities in autonomous ways within the project defined limits, without interference and restrictions
- When clarification or instruction and advice were needed, the UN Women team was very responsive
- Reporting system was relatively simple and easy, not creating additional burdens for organizations, particularly those that are small, local and grassroots

KEY FINDING 13:

Project monitoring framework is well established, the SMART indicators were properly defined along results chain, monitoring processes were regular and systematic and reporting based on that was clear and precise, providing good insights in implementation process, achieved results, and next planned steps.

Project monitoring framework is well established. The indicator framework is well developed and enables precise monitoring of the achieved results. The indicators are SMART: they are sufficiently specific to enable adequate measurement of results, capturing its 'essence'; measurable, achievable, attributable, relevant and timely. The indicator framework enables to measure achievement of results precisely and clearly. It relies on the elaborated and high functioning reporting system, implemented by stakeholders as well as beneficiaries (for example LSGs). The indicators were achievable, realistic, and also attainable as it is evident from the assessment of effectiveness, which reveals that many of the targets are even exceeded. They were relevant in the sense that they were valid measures of results and also timely, in terms of time spent on data collection, required resources and lack of time-lag between output delivery and measurement of indicator.

The monitoring roles and procedures were clearly defined and practices effectively organized. Project monitoring documentation provides precise data on implementation of each activity, with numerical results and attached spending.

In addition to the basic monitoring, the implementation reports and discussion with the UN Women team reveal continuous reflection on project implementation, discussion and finding solutions for more effective implementation.

4.5 IMPACT

KEY FINDING 14:

It is too early to estimate full impact of the project, but the evidence points to important achievements that will eventually lead to the full scale impact in terms of establishing gender responsive policy and budget planning at central and local levels from which women benefit, thus contributing to the promotion of gender equality. The impact is visible at policy, institutional, community and individual level. It manifests as established foundation for GRB (legal, human resource and procedural), new institutional forms and practices, new dynamic in local decision making between women and LSGs and visible gains that women achieved in terms of infrastructure projects, new or improved services as result of local planning more aligned with women's needs.

Although it is too early to estimate full impact of the project, the evaluation evidence points to the initial achievement of the results and to the processes that create prerequisites for the full desired impact at system, institutional, community as well as individual levels.

IMPACT ON POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

At the national level, results are visible in the adoption of the Organic Budget Law whose composition was influenced by the project interventions, in the adoption of several national policies and programs related to the GEEW (as described in the chapter on effectiveness) and in the introduction of Measure 115 from which women engaged in agriculture directly benefited. Impact is visible also in the introduction of new procedures, with Gender sensitive budget circular through which budget users are requested to provide at least partial gender budgeting. In short, basic foundations of GRB were established with project contribution, but the system was not yet fully established. The new law will require new procedures and methodologies, not all budget users are able to apply gender sensitive budgeting and the system to track budgetary allocations for gender equality is not yet in place.

At the local governance level, the picture is one of diversity as some LSGs are relatively advanced in their introduction of GRB, while others are able to apply only some initial steps. However, regardless of the scale to which GRB is practiced in local planning, the impact on participating municipalities is clear. Brief online survey that was implemented with municipalities indicated great differences between municipalities which were included in the project and those that were not, as well as among municipalities participating in the survey.⁴⁶ Among LSGs participating in the survey, there is generally a higher percentage of programmes that are gender mainstreamed. Around 30% of participating LSGs indicated that less of 25% of their local programmes are gender mainstreamed, while the same percentage states that between quarter and half of the municipal programmes are mainstreamed and 26% states that more than half of programmes are gender mainstreamed (remaining 14% were not able to estimate). Among not-participating municipalities 3 out of 5 (60%) claimed that less than 25% of all programmes are gender mainstreamed and two could not be estimated. Representatives of the LSGs had the opportunity to evaluate the overall capacity of the LSG to implement GRB. Although there is

⁴⁶ The survey was conducted through online questionnaire and all participating LSGs (31) plus 10 non-participating (as control group) were invited to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled out by 23 project participating and 5 not-participating LSGs.

a clear difference between participating and not participating municipalities as the average mark for the first was 4.21/10 and for the second 3.6/10, it is clear that participating municipalities are very different in terms of project impact. The representatives of participating municipalities evaluated their capacities for GRB from the lowest mark 1 to the highest 8. The participating municipalities had the opportunity to self-evaluate the contribution of the project to their capacities to implement GRB, and the average mark was 6.04, with once again big differences between municipalities ranging from 2 to 10.

Experts mentoring LSGs in their efforts to introduce GRB indicated that impact is visible in regard to attitudes among local governmental stakeholders. While years ago GRB was rather unknown or even an imposed concept, now it is quite clear that it has entered the public discourse, and a number of municipalities have gained experience through expert support. As example, the coordinators for equal opportunities in Kochani, Strumica, Shtip, were mentioned as high achieving GRB practitioners. This is complementary to the observation of the project team which perceives as one of the main results the changed paradigm of public policy and budget planning in which gender equality became widely accepted key principle.

“We have managed in the last decade or more to ensure that GRB is not the abstract term or concept as it used to be. We openly speak with governmental stakeholders about GRB as an approach, the strategy to achieve GE. Despite institutional and personal changes, there is continuity, people accept it, concept is there, and it is acknowledged, understood by critical number of people.”

Member of UN Women team

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL IMPACT

Project impact is visible also at the institutional level in three forms: some institutions established new units, others have changed their work practices, while the third established new partnerships, as a result of the project intervention.

An example of the first type of impact is the Resource Centre for Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with UN Women support through project activities. As a knowledge hub integrated

in the central government, the Centre enables continuous capacity building of governmental stakeholders to perform their work in line with gender responsive planning and implementation of policies and budgets.

The example of project impact on internal practices, methods and work of institutions is the State Audit Office. Due to the project, the SAO developed capacities for GRB and introduced new methodologies and procedures for gender sensitive audit, and managed to implement and publish results of the first such audit implemented in 2021. According to representatives of this institution, prior to the project participation they had only vague idea on gender responsive budgeting and audit and they now understand that this can be a part of every audit and not a separate activity. There is also spill-over effect of the impact on work of the SAO. Due to the central position in auditing state institutions (budget users), by requesting the gender sensitive audits, the SAO has been creating a kind of pressure on budget users that are subjects of audit to introduce and regularly perform GRB.

The impact on institutions in form of new partnerships is visible in the case of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food - Skopje and the Ministry of Agriculture. The faculty gain a new role to provide the high expert support to the policies and measures brought by the Ministry, while the Ministry had the opportunity to obtain solid evidence on rural women's needs and capacities to absorb measures introduced and delivered by the Ministry.

COMMUNITY LEVEL IMPACT

The most important outcomes for targeted local communities were gains in local infrastructure based on women's initiatives. The evidence points to examples of such gains in forms of kindergarten, infrastructural projects related to expanding the sidewalks, streets, local parks, introduction or improvement of local services, etc. These gains are the consequence of the increased participation of local CSOs and women in the local planning and budgeting processes. Through mobilization of local women and their increased awareness and understanding of the local budgeting processes as well as through enhancing their self-confidence and capacities to advocate and participate in local policy-making and budgeting processes, the new dynamic in relations between LSG on one hand and women and CSOs on the other hand was achieved. Women's needs were taken into account and LSGs included women's needs in local programmes resulting in concrete changes in local infrastructure or social services.

SUCCESS EXAMPLES

Women's Lobby Demir Kapija, has implemented the project activities related to the mobilization of local women and their active engagement in local policy planning and budgeting processes. The baseline situation regarding women's participation was not favourable at all as women did not participate in public decision making, they were excluded from designing local policies, they did not participate in local community councils, they were not even included in the parent's councils within the schooling system, all these roles were mainly performed by men. Project has included women from nine nearby villages, working on their awareness about local policy and budgeting processes, women's right to participation, their mobilization, articulation of needs and networking and exchange with other women. As a result, women's council was established as independent forum where women have been discussing their priorities and planning the action vis-à-vis local government. Women petitioned for the introduction of kindergarten in one of the villages as parents should take children to another village to kindergarten. They organized meetings with the mayor, a number of public actions and even if the decision to open the kindergarten was under the mandate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and not LSG, they faced resistance of the mayor and local government to support the request for opening kindergarten. After persistent action, the mayor accepted to support them and LSG submitted the request for opening the kindergarten in the village school premises. The request was approved by the Ministry and municipality accepted to finance three employees of the kindergarten. This opened new opportunities for local women to find employment due to the improved child care services.

As another example of far-reaching impact, the local NGOs implementing project activities reported the case of women from village Konce, in eastern North Macedonia. This is a rural, mountainous area in which women are quite isolated living in very traditional communities. The project has had such a strong impact on these women in terms of their awareness and mobilization that as the outcome they founded their own NGO so they can continue to be active after the project ends.

In some cases, women requested from LSGs infrastructural investments that are not aligned to gender specific needs, such as improvement of water supply (Demir Kapija), sewerage system (Bosilovo). However, the basic principle of the project was to mobilize women around their own authentic needs.

The community level impact is also evident in regard to the citizen's monitoring implementation of local budgets, and CSOs acting as watchdogs. Their

supervision of the executing local measures from the perspective of GEEW impact became an important element of local budgeting processes. Some of the local NGO representatives indicated as one of the positive project impacts strengthening the constituency/member base, as through this project they were able to reach more women, connect them, build mutual trust and motivate them to participate actively in various activities not only related to the project objectives.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL IMPACT

Evidence points to the significant individual level changes among women living in targeted local communities, but also among professionals who work in local or national governance institutions and have to perform their roles in line with the new budgeting system.

Local women gained new awareness, new action potential to engage in local policy planning and budgeting processes. Their testimonies as well as impressions shared by the local NGO activists, who worked with women, indicate that now they know how they can hold their local governments accountable for their needs, they know how they can benefit from local GRB processes. Their role has changed from passive to more proactive citizens, empowered women.

"Women became active, they are empowered, they now have requests, and you can see the great advancement. Despite the problems, such as COVID crisis which prevent them to gather and organize local initiatives, they managed to be very active and successful in their claims."

Representative of NGO

Where positive response from the LSG brought visible results in terms of local projects in favour of women, improved infrastructure or services, there was visible increase of trust among women in local authorities. Impact on public administration employees is visible in higher awareness of GRB importance, and higher knowledge and skills how to perform their tasks in the new budget planning system which requires systematic perspective of gender equality to be incorporated in all stages of planning and execution process. As indicated by one representative of LSG, the greatest gain from the project is that employees in LSGs understand gender equality and they are able to recognize women's needs in their communities and based on that to define support measures.

“Previously, we would usually note that proposed programmes equally contribute to women and men, but only now we understand that needs of women and men are not the same and programme must recognize these specific needs and respond to it. We understand that it is important to prioritize women’s needs. If we need to rework sidewalk or water supply, we should prioritize that because it is more in the interest of women who use more sidewalks and who bear key domestic responsibilities for which water is crucial. That is gain, to bring down stereotypes on women, prejudice that women need little money, to understand that we have to allocate more from the budget for women.”

Representative of LSG

KEY FINDING 15:

The Project has visible impact on women from various vulnerable groups, such as rural women, women from underdeveloped and remote communities, economically deprived women, and Roma women. However, there is no visible systematic approach to disability inclusion in the projects implemented by local NGOs.

The Project reached many women belonging to marginalized social groups, such as rural women and women living in remote and underdeveloped local communities, women from socially isolated communities, such as Konce, economically deprived women. Roma women were included in the project activities in some local communities, such as in the case of Stip municipality.

The outreach to local women beneficiaries was done by implementing CSOs based on mapping of women interested to take more active role in local policy making in their communities. Basically, no other specific criteria was applied that would focus more on some specific group of women. The approach was to ensure wide participation of women with the focus on most vulnerable. The organizations could not influence the participation of specific groups of women in the processes. For example, there was no specific disability approach but some women with disabilities were included by described selection process. No specific accessibility standards were systematically applied in project activities and materials. However, although some women did not actively participate in the project activities, local women advocate continuously communicated with women in the local communities to identify priorities to be addressed by the LSGs. Hence, the needs of the specific vulnerable groups

were to certain extent identified and included in the advocacy and lobbying activities.

4.6 SUSTAINABILITY

KEY FINDING 16:

The Project has successfully built capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers, but the sustainability of these newly gained capacities will depend on the continuity of public administration staff, capacities of institutions to transfer knowledge and procedures to new staff, but also on the capacities of NGOs to perform their watchdog role and readiness of women to continue to play active role in local budgeting and policy planning processes. Despite the increased awareness of GRB, newly developed skills and available tools, the ownership of national stakeholders (government) is not yet full, mainly because of the late adoption of the Organic Budget Law due to which during the major part of the project implementation, the governmental stakeholders did not have legal obligation to implement GRB.

As it was already indicated under the impact section, some preconditions for GRB sustainability are already present. Capacities of state officials are developed to a certain extent, but sustainability of this resource depends on the stability of staff. In case of high turnover, this project legacy might be lost. The Resource centre can ensure continuous work on increasing capacities of various stakeholders for GRB, particularly in light of the new law and bylaws that will follow, which will require new knowledge and skills. The centre is fully technically equipped but as indicated by the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the issue remains how the Resource centre will work, what will be the human resources that can provide its continuous work. Presently the RC relies on employees of the Ministry who have to conduct capacity building activities in addition to their regular work and additional project paid staff. In future, functionality and sustainability of the centre will depend on the available staff, which might require the new systematization of jobs within the ministry. It is important to note that some of interviewed stakeholders raised the issue of the current use of the centre. According to their opinion, centre is underused and could increase dynamics of trainings and use more experts’ knowledge. On the other hand, representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as well as representatives of ZELS think that this and other projects rely ‘too much’ on external experts and should use more the expertise of professional staff from respective institutions.

Adoption of the new Law on Equal Opportunities is expected to further contribute to the process of GRB institutionalization by including the positions of the EO coordinators in the organizational charts of the municipalities. Interviewed experts/mentors expect that this Law will endorse an article requiring use of gender disaggregated data and statistics, critical for the proper gender analysis of the programs at the local level.

In terms of maximizing the impact of the GRB interventions, and increasing the likelihood of sustainability, the experts/mentors raised the issue of the treatment of reporting on the GRB program implementation with a basic remark that there are plenty of reports which circulate/are shared with the MoLSP, as one of the major stakeholders and UN Women, but with no further action on their consolidation, compilation, systematization and usage as a resource particularly given the uniqueness and duration of the GRB implementation at local level including the training and mentoring programs. Publishing some kind of newsletter was flagged as very useful means for wider national and international distribution, exchange and dissemination of information. Although the MoLSP publishes all relevant documents on their website, there is an online library of the Resource Centre, and UN women regularly publishes and communicates all publications through regional website and social media, so there is opinion that products should be further consolidated and made available in one place.

Other institutional/system pillars of sustainability include the State Audit Office which has good opportunity to create pressure on budget users to perform GRB, ZELS who is important coordinator of the GRB implementation in municipalities and NALAS that can use the opportunity to promote GRB at local level through network of mayors, potentially with the leading role of female mayors' group that is established within the network.

The evaluation evidence points to conclusion that despite achievements, national ownership is not yet fully established, and key reasons for that are delays in adoption of the law and slow pace of overall public administration reform. Regardless, interviewed experts/mentors see the current PFM reform as a major window of opportunity for systemic integration of GRB into national planning and budgeting. From that standpoint they believe that UN Women needs to be more involved in the policy dialogue with other critical international development partners, the IFIs – IMF and the WB, with the Ministry of Finance, in supporting and fostering this reform which will lead to full institutionalization of GRB at macro level.

The sustainability of women's mobilization is another issue. Evaluation evidence indicates that women are now connected in different ways, through social media, Viber groups, but the sustainability of their networks is questionable without further NGO support and funding.

Dynamic social, political and economic context requires careful planning of sustainability. In order to ensure that exit strategy is well adjusted to the actual context, the project team has initiated planning of phase out strategy in the last stage of the project implementation. Plans have not yet been set out, but the evaluation team was informed that plans are based on the lessons learned, and will take into account the findings of this evaluation as well as inputs from the consultative process with stakeholders.

KEY FINDING 17:

The Project was implemented using replication methods which proved as successful in transferring knowledge and practices in targeted municipalities, and its potential for further replication provides good ground for sustainability as remaining municipalities can be reached through future interventions. The upscaling was visible in integrating GRB competences and practices at the level of the national system for policy and budget planning, but with the need to further support the processes until the system is fully developed and reached certain routine in implementation.

The Project has managed to replicate successful practices in various ways. The capacity building was replicated across the budget institutions and across LSGUs. Through methodological guidelines and tools the project has replicated GRB procedures across budget users at central and local levels. The horizontal exchange of experiences between women agents of change and CSOs replication of successful forms of engagement were replicated, such as women's local councils, advocacy methods and modes, etc.

From the sustainability perspective, it is equally important that the potential project results have to be replicated in future to ensure further development of GRB at all levels. The replication potential is detected in regard to:

- Inclusion of the new set of LSGs in the project in order to increase capacities and initiate GRB processes;
- Replication of good models of local budget watchdog activities in other municipalities through

sharing experiences and dissemination of the model in form of some handbook, guidelines or compendium of practices;

- Replication of capacity building trainings with broader set of stakeholders, including staff of institutions budget users, local self-governments, CSOs.

The upscaling was ensured through integrating GRB processes that were partially implemented by some institutions to the system of GRB backed by the law and established systematically across the public finance management system at all levels. This legally established system now opens the room for further promotion of GRB among budget users who were only partially or not at all able or willing to perform their policy planning and budgeting roles in gender sensitive manner. This means further introduction of GRB in all national level budget users and all LSGs and local budget users.

4.7 GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

KEY FINDING 18:

Gender and human rights principles and strategies are in the core of the GRB Project, which is reflected from the initial conceptualization and design of the Project all the way through its implementation, monitoring and reporting, and specifically taking into account the needs and rights of various groups of vulnerable women (particularly rural) with paying respect to the highest human rights standards.

Evaluation evidence indicates that the HRBA and gender transformative approaches have been consistently applied and integrated into the Project's implementing modalities. One of the examples which illustrates these approaches, at the national governance level, is increased involvement of the MoAFWE, inter alia, in the systemic transformation of the policies regarding the rights of women to land ownership. Namely, although the Family law stipulates that property acquired in marriage can be registered under the names of both spouses, in reality often the property is registered on men. In addition, despite the fact that Constitution specifies that even if only one spouse is registered as the owner, it is considered joint registration, but in the

practice only the spouse registered as the owner enjoys legal benefits from the property. The Project's supported activity implemented by the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food - Skopje, *Measuring women's empowerment in agriculture with survey based and experimental economics method*, at the section on Asset ownership, indicates that in nearly 80% of the rural families, the husband or husband's father owns the family house and in 62% of the cases they are also owners of the arable land. Only 5% of surveyed households reported that a woman has the right of ownership of the house. In respect to the property inheritance, the dominant tradition is for men to inherit the entire property. This is especially the case in the rural areas where agriculture is the dominant activity for the household. As response, the Project provides the expert advice and support to the MoAFWE on upscaling the good practice for GM in policies for rural and agricultural development.

The transformative changes generated by GRB measures at the local government level are much closer to the people and as such are designed to address and resolve the root causes of the gender inequalities and tackling the gender stereotypes. As an example, women, participants in a Focus Group, have been initially informed by the CSO Zhensko lobi Demir Kapija about the possibility to form women local community council, which was quite a novelty in an environment where almost entire local community councils were consisted of male representatives. A woman from Przhdevo village was elected president of the local community council (LMC). She felt honoured and encouraged by this assignment. She started to discuss the issues of concern with other women in the village. Prior to that UN Women announced a call for selection of CSOs as implementing partners for the GRB advocacy work at the local community level two years ago. The CSO Zhensko lobi Demir Kapija developed a concept how to approach women from different communities and raise their awareness about the concrete issues, concerns and demands which they as residents from these municipalities have on their mind. To that end, Zhensko lobi used a door-to-door approach. They introduced local women to the project and opportunities stemming from there. The next step was to familiarize local women with the municipal administration and authorities heading specific sectors in the municipal administration, which was followed by training of women on the municipal competences. In effect, the municipal local councils were established. They continued to maintain regular communications with the mayors of the respective municipalities. The women MLCs use these communications with the mayors to voice their needs and initiate activities, measures and concrete projects which will require use of local budgets.

In summary, the assessment of the activities initiated in these several local communities by the participants in this FGD was positive particularly given that their initial goal of awareness raising activities and increased women's participation group had been achieved.

KEY FINDING 19:

The Project follows the UN Women strategic commitments to fully dedicate to mainstreaming disability inclusion throughout its work, in line with its corporate strategy on disability inclusion, the UN Disability Inclusion strategy and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Project has these commitments integrated into its design; however, the evaluation evidence has not identified in the implementation of the Project any corresponding measures at any level of Project's execution so far.

The Project has applied the common UN approach to LNOB, as intersectional principle in the UN Women policies and core component of the HRBA, including its disability inclusion dimension. Nevertheless, the disability inclusion, per se, was not a specific objective in different Project components, hence the evaluation did not find evidence to that effect. It should be noted, though, that the nature of the Project and its scope so far have not been sufficiently conducive in that direction, including the available funding and management arrangements.

The only evidence points to the inclusion of women with disabilities sporadically in activities related to the outreach and mobilization of women in local communities, or to some LSGUs' budgeted measures targeting children with disabilities. Overall, however, as implementing organizations stated, no specific disability inclusion measures were consistently implemented.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

Persistent efforts in providing entry points in mainstreaming gender perspectives into the whole process of PFM reform through integrating gender perspective into performance and programme-based budgeting proved worthwhile within the steady progress in transitioning towards that end.

Continued and systematic capacity development of public administration has been critical in addressing the institutional changes and turnover caused during elections.

During 2021, the country went through significant shifts in leadership at local level, as well as restructured central government, followed by appointments of new Coordinators for Equal Opportunities and new composition of the commissions for equal opportunities. To address the persisting need for continued and systematic capacity development of public administration, the project supported the establishment of a Resource centre on gender responsive policy making and budgeting.

The Resource Centre on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting as a hub of knowledge proved as a good approach in capacity development that can be further profiled as a place for deepening specific knowledge on GRB, in particular sectoral or intersectional areas.

Under direct leadership of the MLSP the Centre is expected to serve as a training hub and repository of resources on Gender Equality and GRB. Currently, according to the respective Government Decree, the eligible participants in the capacity development activities of the Centre are solely government and public sector employees.

Enabling space and a conducive environment for effective participation of women's civil society organizations contributes to the effectiveness of introduction and implementation of GRB in local communities.

Women's organizations have a crucial role in gender-responsive policy making and budgeting, given their pivotal role in promoting reform, influencing

policies and ensuring monitoring and accountability. Moreover, municipalities that have close partnerships with local CSOs prove to have greater potential to become GRB champions as they benefit from women's participation, leadership and expertise at all levels. The project witnessed a number of such examples when municipalities have partnered or sub-contracted specialized CSOs to design and deliver specific gender responsive services.

Supporting local self-governments to budget and implement measures for economic empowerment of women is critical in reducing the inequalities, and redressing gender gaps on the labour market.

Ensuring opportunities for economic empowerment of women, especially the most vulnerable, will directly impact lives of women and is expected to have positive long run effects in the society. UN Women support to the implementation of the Measure 115 under which 250 women agricultural producers had an opportunity to benefit from financial support for strengthening their businesses and support to 12 municipalities for implementation and expansion of their economic empowerment measures, with the focus on vulnerable women, enhanced local governments capacities for upscaling the proven approaches in future planning and budgeting processes.

Experience in implementing gender budgeting up to now shows the enduring need for empowerment of the vulnerable groups of women, particularly those experiencing intersectional disadvantages and related inequalities.

Recognition of women headed households, single-mothers and women in rural areas among the frequently excluded women led to further innovative interventions needed for the promotion of, for example, women farmers or addressing the inequalities regarding the land property ownership. The latter has respectively reflected the MoAFWE's involvement and contribution since 2018 to the consultative processes and provided inputs on the National Strategy on GE and adoption of the National Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development (2021-2027). Yet, in addition to these positive examples, the efforts towards identification of the needs and social inclusion of women with disabilities require continued support in future planning of the GRB interventions.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION 1 (F1-F3):

The project was and remains to be highly relevant for the advancement of gender equality but also for the reform of the public finance management in North Macedonia. The relevance is evident not only in regard to the reform processes but also more specifically to the needs of specific stakeholders with respect to their roles, responsibilities and rights within that reform. It responds to the needs of decision makers and public administration at all levels to develop capacities to work in the new system and apply new principles and procedures. It responds to the needs of civil society to develop capacities to engage, advocate, monitor, and, mobilize women for more accountable and responsive GRB processes. It responds to the needs of women, including those who are marginalized due to their age, remote area of living, social exclusion, from underdeveloped communities, to become aware and capable of actively requesting alignment of local policies, measures and budgets with their needs. Finally, it contributes to the obligations and commitments that North Macedonia has with regard to the international conventions (such as CEDAW, Beijing Platform, Istanbul Convention, etc.) and global/international policy agendas, such as Agenda for sustainable development 2030, EU accession agenda, and similar.

CONCLUSION 2 (F4-F6):

The project demonstrates high coherence with the UN Women strategy to advance gender equality in North Macedonia, with UNCT cooperation framework in the country, and with several important initiatives of other international organizations, particularly those focused on strengthening political participation of women, public finance management reform, good governance at local and national levels. The UN Women subsequently implemented interventions in North Macedonia (2011-2013), (2014-2016), (2017-2018) and the current ongoing one, prompted progress and success in the gradual development of the legal and

regulatory framework and policies governing GRB at both national and local levels. The Project builds on the interlinkages with other UN Women supported interventions in wider region of the Western Balkans, generating synergies and other positive effects and causing increase in the capacities of the governance systems essential for achieving GE and WE, and GRB policy planning and budgeting. The Project is fully aligned with two consecutive UN strategic documents as framework for the UN agencies development assistance to North Macedonia, the UN PSD (2016-2020) and UN SCDF (2021-2025). The Project reflects the UN Women institutional commitments pronounced under the SDG Agenda 2030, particularly SDG 5 referring to GE and WE, and the reclassified indicator 5.c.1. This indicator sets an international standard for GRB and provides important data for monitoring progress of the country towards SDG 5, while UN Women is the responsible agency to report under this target.

CONCLUSION 3 (F8-F10):

The project was effectively implemented, achieving and exceeding planned results. The capacities of various governmental stakeholders at national and local levels were increased, new procedures, methodologies and practices were introduced, CSOs watchdogs were mobilized to monitor local budget planning processes and their implementation, and women were mobilized to have more active role in requesting financial allocations in line with their needs. The effective achievement of results was ensured by employing diversified, innovative implementation strategies adapted for the needs and capacities of all types of stakeholders: national government, budget users, local governments, CSOs, and local women. Such strategies enabled to overcome or properly address numerous challenges the Project faced during implementation, including delays in adoption of the Organic Budget Law, slow pace of PMF reform, high turnover of public administration staff, COVID-19 pandemic or similar.

CONCLUSION 4 (F11-F13):

The project was efficiently implemented, with proper allocation of resources to achieve planned results, good management and coordination, as well as monitoring practices. All interviewed stakeholders emphasized their appreciation of the way in which the UN Women implementation team coordinated and implemented activities, in highly responsive and responsible manner. They felt supported and the methods of coordination and cooperation contributed to their organizational capacities to design, implement projects and report on the achievement.

CONCLUSION 5 (F14-F15):

Although it is still early to estimate project impact in its full scale, the processes leading towards desired impact are visible and will likely lead to the planned outcomes. The evidence points to the impact at the system level, both central and local, as the new system of policy and budget planning is emerging and visible even if not in the full form. The impact is visible at the level of participating institutions and their employees applying new methods, procedures, with new awareness and competences. The impact is visible in CSOs and activists as they understand better budgeting processes and have the opportunity to engage in these processes whether as watchdogs or as mobilizing, advocacy and lobbying forces. Impact is visible at the community level, the new projects financed from budgets are centred around women's needs, and finally, the impact is visible at individual level, as empowered and aware women request budget allocations in line with their needs, but also among other stakeholders as competences are also developed on the individual level among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Evaluation evidence points to the more committed performance in GRB planning among governmental stakeholders, and more aware and proactive women who often testified that project engagement had profoundly changed them in the way how they perceive their rights to influence local policies. Changes in local communities are visible in new dynamics between women as demand side, local government as public service supply side and NGOs as watchdogs of these processes, but also in tangible results – new kindergartens, improvement of infrastructure as required by local women, and new or better services. At the institutional level, changes are identified in new procedures and methods of budget planning and implementation and at the system level as entirely new framework of financing gender equality and empowerment of women established through new legal framework top—down. However, the positive changes are not always straightforward. Postponement of the adoption of the Organic Budget Law made more difficult to achieve full impact of

the project as planned, because achievement of the results had to rely mainly on willingness and commitment of the individuals and not on their legal obligations and mandates. Consequently, some stakeholders still do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to implement GRB, and the system of systematic tracking of allocations for GEEW is not yet in place.

CONCLUSION 6 (F16-F17):

With adoption of the Organic Budget Law at the end of the project cycle, likelihood of sustainability of the project results highly increased as all benefits achieved by the project (such as new awareness, skills for GRB, methodologies, procedures, results, mobilization and active integration of civil society, academia in the process) now can be more firmly integrated or linked with the formal system of GRB. Sustainability of results is ensured by the legal, developed and tested methodologies, increased capacities of stakeholders for implementation of GRB and instruments for future continuous capacity building due to the establishment of GRB Resource Centre, ZELS platform for coordination of efforts of municipalities to introduce GRB, etc. However, there is still more needed to be done as legal framework should be elaborated through bylaws, stakeholders need continuous capacity building whether through refreshment trainings or deepening their knowledge and skills, women in local communities need further support in coordination of their interests and negotiations with local governments, while watchdog organizations need support to systematically and in larger scope monitor national and local budgeting processes.

CONCLUSION 7 (F18-F19):

The project was fully aligned with human rights and gender equality principles, respecting also the 'Leave No One Behind' principle, though focus on women in local communities who were more eager to engage did not leave the room for more systematic specific focus on the most vulnerable. The evaluation evidence clearly indicates that the HRBA and gender transformative approaches have been consistently applied and integrated into all of the Project's stages starting from the programming and design, through implementation to the monitoring and reporting and into the Project's implementing modalities. UN Women is fully committed to mainstreaming disability in line with its corporate strategy, the UN Disability inclusion strategy and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. At the level of the Project, the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) has been recalled for identifying the key vulnerabilities, reasons for exclusion of women,

and men, including the most marginalized groups and through Project's activities to give chance to supporting and giving access to services by the most vulnerable women that either leave in rural/remote areas or on the margins of the society. Yet, the evaluation evidence had some difficulties to identify evidence of systematic approach, particularly to the disability inclusion, as one of the most vulnerable groups of women and men, in the society.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented in this chapter build on the analysis of findings, conclusions, lessons learned and suggestions collected by the key informant interviews as well as during the workshop with ERG members. Recommendations were discussed and validated with the EMG at the final stage of evaluation (preliminary findings presentation and validation of the report). They are presented as operational actions, with estimated level of priority and the key steps for implementation. As such, recommendations can be easily used to inform future UN Women programming or programme management and they have been targeting the project team.

General recommendation is to continue with the project as clearly GRB institution in Macedonia is at a turning point. There is finally a legal ground for systematic implementation, but it will be required further operationalization of legal framework and different forms of support directed towards diverse stakeholders in order to ensure that GRB is fully in place. Employees in the respective institutions need to reach certain routine in its implementation and monitoring, while civil society watchdogs need further support for monitoring budget implementation and advocating its revision, if needed. Following recommendations point to more specific areas of future needed interventions in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION R1 (F1, F2, F14, F16, C1, C5, C6):

Contribute with expertise and other means to further developments of normative framework for systematic implementation of GRB at all levels in line with PFM reform. After the adoption of the Organic Budget Law, the legal foundation for GRB will be further developed by series of bylaws and UN Women can contribute to that process significantly.

HIGH PRIORITY

Possible actions:

- Provide expert support in future development of bylaws through which the Organic Budget Law will be operationalized and implemented.
- Support the efforts to integrate gender tagging of budget programmes in line with 5.c.1 indicator "system in place to make and track budget allocations for GE".
- Adjust or develop new protocols, manuals, or other tools that will make easier for different stakeholders to perform their roles in budgeting processes at national and local levels.
- Consolidate and/or promote further repositories of relevant documents that will make access to normative documents and implementation tools accessible to broader groups of stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION R2 (F6, C2):

Enhance existing and develop new partnerships, alliances in order to contribute to the synergy in various efforts to effectively implement GRB and direct financial flows to the GEEW priorities in line with authentic needs of women. UN Women should continue to nurture its partnership relations and cooperation with the international institutions such as the EU, and the IFIs – World Bank and the IMF, in order to further sustain the joint collaborative efforts within the policy dialogue with the MoF and in developing the pending OBL's implementing framework.

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Possible actions:

- UN Women should seek to expand the pool of available resources for GEEW, and GRB, by further exploration of innovative approaches and expansion of the partnerships with the external development partners in order to be able to influence national and local budget allocations for GRB policy planning and budgeting.
- Initiate and participate regional exchange on GRB achievements, challenges and good practices, contributing to the positive regional environment for the GRB reforms and stimulating healthy competition among stakeholders.
- Build on good practice of partnership between academia (Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food - Skopje) and government (Ministry of Agriculture) and promote similar models for other areas that are of key importance for GEEW, such

as measures in support to women's entrepreneurship, social policy measures, etc.

- Introduce more exchange of information between local and national governments on GRB processes.

RECOMMENDATION R3 **(F1, F14, F16, C1, C5, C6):**

Support further stakeholders in their capacities to develop fully GRB at national and local levels and perform their role in that system by providing expertise and adequate resources

HIGH PRIORITY

Possible actions:

- Support work and use of Resource centre on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, focusing on systematization of positions responsible for work of Resource centre.
- Expand the outreach of trainings delivered by Resource centre to larger number of budget users.
- Continue and expand training of trainers for local self-governments in order to maintain, deepen and expand number of local administration staff who has knowledge and skills to perform their roles in line with GRB.
- Maintain and further develop and expand the electronic platform for gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting with new tools and technics for displaying gender-disaggregated data by the municipalities based on the initial ZELS-endorsed platform and maintain close cooperation and partnership with ZELS. (Gender disaggregated data are necessarily reliable and gender divided statistical data on various social criteria such as age, region, ethnicity, education, economic or social status.)
- Seek assistance and cooperation with the State Statistics Office for improving the availability of gender disaggregated data aimed to be used in the gender transformative policy planning and budgeting, more specifically in the program preparation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Support gender related research and analysis with the aim to provide more evidence for policy making and budgeting, particularly in the areas that are identified as not sufficiently researched and analysed.
- In partnership with the State Audit Office, advance GRB capacities of internal auditors

that are appointed in the ministries and LSGUs, which according to the testimonies of different stakeholders currently have low capacities for GRB.

- Further increase capacities of MPs for overseeing the implementation of gender equality legislation and strategies given that they require further support to recognize gender relevant issues in public policy and budgets and raise these issues at relevant fora.
- Increase the number and diversity of local civil servants that are trained for GRB in order to enable more widespread understanding and smoother GRB planning, implementation and monitoring.

RECOMMENDATION R4 **(F15, F16, F17, C5, C6, C7)**

Maintain and expand processes which are not fully sustainable at this point without further support and are crucial for the needs based and transparent GRB processes, particularly mobilization and coordination of local women and their engagement with local budget planning and execution, as well as budget watchdog initiatives which still need expert support and guidance.

HIGH PRIORITY

Possible actions:

- UN Women to continue to foster Project's implementation modalities and through the Project's activities continue to endorse measures which may be used to influence national rural development policies and inform future interventions for addressing the key gender inequalities and exclusion of women in agriculture.
- In the outreach and mobilization of local women enhance the focus on women economic empowerment, not through direct support, but rather through increasing their awareness and supporting advocacy and lobbying for WEE programs in planning of local policies and budgets.
- Support cooperation between CSOs and LSGUs in developing local economic empowerment programmes for women.
- Increase networking of women and exchange of experience and mutual learning across municipalities. Some joint initiatives by women could also be organized across municipalities.

RECOMMENDATION R5 (F18, F19, C7):

Continue to take care of LNOB expanding outreach to more diverse groups of vulnerable women, increasing importance of disability inclusion in the implementation of outreach activities among implementing partners by adding the disability inclusion requirements in the calls for project proposals, or by selecting the proportion of projects focused specifically to women with disabilities and women from the most marginalized groups.

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Possible actions:

- In addition to the generalized outreach and mobilization of women in local communities, reserve some resources for more specific initiatives targeting specific vulnerable women, such as women living with disabilities, Roma women, single mothers, or similar.
- Include basic disability inclusion requirements in calls for proposals for implementing partners with the aim to pay more attention to this aspect in their project design and implementation.

ANNEX 1: PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE

ORIGINAL ToC

IF the (1) the MoF introduces gender perspective in the programme budgeting, as part of the Public Finance Management Reform; (2) National Gender Machinery (NGM) leads and oversees gender responsive policy-making and budgeting of line-ministries and state institutions; (3) Local governments apply GRB tools to analyse, plan and bring about budgetary decisions which respond to the needs of women and men; (4) Members of Parliament monitor and advocate for gender responsive policies and budgets; (5) Women, including the most vulnerable groups, voice their needs and act as agents of change in planning and budgeting processes; and (6) Civil Society Organizations formulate evidence-based policy analyses and effectively advocate for gender responsive planning and budgeting.

THEN, The Government's public finance management and the strategic planning processes will respond to the different needs of women and men and civil society organizations, women, including the most vulnerable, will actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and benefit from public policies and budgets.

BECAUSE:

1. The capacity of the MoF to introduce gender perspective in PFM are increased;
2. The capacities of National Gender Machinery (NGM) to lead and oversee gender responsive policy-making and budgeting of line-ministries and state institutions are enhanced;
3. Local governments are able to apply GRB tools and respond to the needs of women and men, including the most vulnerable groups;
4. Members of Parliament have enhanced initiatives to monitor and advocate for gender responsive policies and budgets;
5. Women are empowered to voice their needs and act as agents of change in planning and budgeting process and
6. Civil Society Organizations have the capacities to formulate evidence-based policy analyses and effectively advocate for gender responsive planning and budgeting.

ANNEX 2:

EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Questions		Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources
RELEVANCE				
1.	To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? Was the choice of interventions relevant to the situation of the target groups?	Documental evidence on needs and priorities of women in North Macedonia, needs of public administration officials at national and local level for gender responsive policy planning and budgeting, needs of gender machinery to take coordination role, needs of MPs, needs of CSOs to become watchdogs.	Document review Semi structured interviews Questionnaire surveys	UN, government's, CSOs reports on the GE status in North Macedonia, Project documents, Interviews with UN Women, national and local governments' representatives, CSOs and experts
2.	To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to gender equality priorities in the country?	Documental evidence on adherence to national gender equality policies and other development policies of the Republic of North Macedonia Perception of KIs of correlation with the national policy priorities and interventions and legal framework Evidence on consultation process in preparation of the project	Document review Semi structured interviews Questionnaire surveys	UN, government's, CSOs reports on the GE status in North Macedonia, Project documents, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, development partners and experts
3.	To what extent is the intervention aligned with international frameworks? a) To agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment (CEDAW, Beijing, Istanbul Convention) b) To GE standards in EU accession process? c) To Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda?	Documental evidence on adherence to international commitments (CEDAW, Beijing, SDGs), EU Gender Equality Acquis; Perception of KIs of correlation of project intervention with overarching international commitments	Document review Semi structured interviews	UN, government's, CSOs reports on the GE status in North Macedonia, EU reports on North Macedonia, Project documents, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs and development partners, experts

Evaluation Questions		Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources
4.	To what extent key stakeholders were involved in programme's conceptualization and design process?	Documental evidence on involvement of key stakeholders in project design	Document review Semi structured interviews Questionnaire surveys	UN, government's, CSOs reports on the GE status in North Macedonia, EU reports on North Macedonia, Project documents, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs
5.	To what extent the project intervention continues to be relevant for the situation of gender equality and needs of relevant stakeholders? How was relevance ensured after covid-19 pandemic outbreak?	Evidence on adjustment/updating of approaches and strategies to changing context. Evidence on existing demand for the continuation of the project by national stakeholders	Document review Semi structured interviews FGDs Questionnaire surveys	UN, government's, CSOs reports on the GE status in North Macedonia, Project documents, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts
COHERENCE				
6.	Is internal programme logic coherent? To what extent defined activities and outputs lead to set objectives and outcomes?	Consistency between activities, outputs and outcomes	Document review	Programme document
7.	Is there consistence between indicators and outputs/outcomes?	Consistency between indicators and outputs/outcomes	Document review	Programme document
8.	To what extent does the project fit within UN Women's Strategic Plan and initiatives in North Macedonia and more broadly, Western Balkan Region? a) To what extent does the project fit within UN Women's Strategic Plan and interrelated three-fold mandate and UN Women's work in North Macedonia? b) Are there any synergies and inter-linkages between the project and other interventions of UN Women in North Macedonia and the Western Balkan Region?	Level of alignment of the project with UN Women SP Approaches and strategies being of normative, coordination and operational character Evidence on similarities among objectives with other programmes of UN Women Programme Office in North Macedonia and connections in implementation approaches Existence and coherence of synergies enabling more effective delivery, existence of potential duplication Existence of mechanisms of internal coordination in planning, implementation and reporting.	Document review Semi structured interviews	UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021 UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025 UN Women Strategic Note for North Macedonia Project documents Interview with UN Women

Evaluation Questions		Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources
9.	To what extent is the project aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in North Macedonia?	Documental evidence on alignment of the Project objectives with UNSDCF in North Macedonia	Document review Semi structured interviews	Project documents, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, other UN RCO
10.	To what extent the project is in complementarity, harmonized and coordinated with the interventions of external, non-UN interventions? a) To what extent the implementation of the project ensures synergies and coordination with Government's and key partners' relevant efforts while avoiding duplications? b) To what extent is in complementarity with other development partners' interventions?	Documental evidence on adherence to national gender equality policies and other relevant policies of the Republic of North Macedonia Perception of KIs of correlation with the national policy priorities and interventions and legal framework Acceptance by partners, stakeholders and institutions, ownership Evidence on consultation process in preparation of the project	Document review Semi structured interviews Questionnaire surveys	Project documents, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, development partners and experts
11.	What is UN Women's comparative advantage in North Macedonia to implement this project?	Documental evidence and KIs perception on comparative advantages of UN Women Programme Office in the areas of interventions	Document review Semi structured interviews Questionnaire surveys	Project documents, progress reports Interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs and development partners, Experts UN Women and other initiative's web sites
EFFECTIVENESS				
12.	To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?	Evidence of contributions to the different levels of the TOC Evidence of progress towards identified targets (difference between indicators of achievement and targets) Most significant changes achieved Evidence of unexpected achievements (not envisaged by the project document and intervention logic) and target groups and beneficiaries affected KIs (right-holders, duty bearers, partners) positive/negative reporting on achievements	Document review Semi structured interviews FGDs Questionnaire surveys	Project documents, result framework, progress reports, knowledge products and analyses Relevant Government and local government reports and documents Interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, experts

Evaluation Questions		Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources
13.	<p>How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results?</p> <p>a) How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?</p> <p>b) To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies innovative for implementation of GRB in North Macedonia? What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of the results?</p>	<p>Level of contribution of different project strategies towards project results</p> <p>Extent to which innovative approaches are integrated in the project design and implementation and their evidence of their contribution to project results</p> <p>Perception of KIs on effectiveness of the strategies</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Questionnaire surveys</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, knowledge products and analyses</p> <p>Relevant Government and local government reports and documents</p> <p>Interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, and experts</p>
14.	<p>What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results?</p> <p>a) Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom?</p> <p>b) What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?</p> <p>c) Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) identified in the implementation of the different actions and what level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?</p>	<p>Number and type of internal and external enablers and barriers to successful project implementation and achievement of results</p> <p>Perception of KIs on internal and external enablers and barriers to successful implementation</p> <p>Evidence of mitigation actions initiated to overcome the challenges</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Questionnaire surveys</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, knowledge products and analyses</p> <p>Relevant Government and local government reports and documents</p> <p>Interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, and experts</p>
EFFICIENCY				
15.	<p>Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?</p>	<p>Relative assessment of the investment of resources and complexity and achievements of project components</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, knowledge products and analyses</p> <p>Relevant Government and local government reports and documents</p> <p>Interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs and experts</p>

Evaluation Questions		Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources
16.	Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? d) Where does accountability lie? e) Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?	Adequacy of organizational assets, structures and capabilities (in terms of financial and human resources) Effectiveness of internal coordination/communication (vertical/horizontal) mechanisms Effectiveness of external coordination/communication mechanisms with partners and beneficiaries	Document review Semi structured interviews	Interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs and development partners
17.	How efficient was the monitoring system? a) To what extent are the project monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? b) To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?	Extent to which project monitoring and reporting is results-based Ability of project staff to effectively capture, measure and monitor progress (using baseline data) Evidence of learning from the collected data being used to assess progress and adjust implementation Degree of donor and partners' satisfaction with results-based reports	Document review Semi structured interviews	Interviews with UN Women and national and local governments UN Women RMS reports
IMPACT				
18.	What are the areas of achieved or potential measurable impact of the Project? a) What is the impact on the target groups and beneficiaries at individual, community and institutional/system levels? b) Were there any unintended positive or negative results?	Evidence on long-term and sustainable changes or positive trends that benefit target groups and end users (at individual, collective, institutional / systemic level and at the societal level)	Document review Semi structured interviews FGDs Questionnaire surveys	Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts
19.	How project impacts or is likely to impact women end beneficiaries and the most vulnerable groups?	Evidence on long-term and sustainable changes or positive trends on benefits to end beneficiaries	Document review Semi structured interviews FGDs Questionnaire surveys	Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources	
SUSTAINABILITY				
20.	<p>What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?</p> <p>a) To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance?</p> <p>b) How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?</p> <p>c) How effectively has project contributed to the establishment of effective partnerships and development of national capacities?</p>	<p>Evidence of changes in knowledge / behaviours / skills in partners and target groups to sustain the results</p> <p>Evidence of knowledge/skills being applied</p> <p>Evidence of rights holders articulating their priorities and needs; accessing services; and contributing to national/ local planning and development</p> <p>Number of champions identified or created through interventions</p> <p>Evidence of accountability and oversight systems</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Questionnaire surveys</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts</p>
21.	<p>To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?</p>	<p>Documental evidence on sustainability plans</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women</p>
22.	<p>To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?</p>	<p>Evidence of replicated and up-scaled practices</p> <p>Perception of stakeholders on effectiveness of these practices and contribution to sustainability</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews, FGDs</p> <p>Questionnaire surveys</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts</p>

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sampling/sources
Gender Equality and Human Rights			
Sub Criterion: Human Rights and Gender Equality			
<p>23. To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?</p> <p>a) To what extent HRBA and gender transformative approaches have been incorporated into the design, monitoring and reporting of the project?</p> <p>b) To what extent participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights holders and duty bearers) was maximized in the project's planning, design, implementation and decision?</p>	<p>Evidence of project results addressing causes of inequality set out in NS GE and international frameworks</p> <p>Evidence of extent to which interventions consider / address the needs of women, including women from marginalized groups</p> <p>Alignment of partner's mandates with the areas and strategies of intervention</p> <p>Perception and evidence of influence of partners on the thematic areas of the project</p> <p>Ability of partners to reach the target groups and beneficiaries (capacity, sector wise, geographically)</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Questionnaire surveys</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts</p>
<p>24. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?</p>	<p>Evidence on disability inclusion</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Questionnaire surveys</p>	<p>Project documents, result framework, progress reports, interviews with UN Women, national and local government representatives, CSOs, women final beneficiaries, development partners and experts</p>

ANNEX 3:

RESULT FRAMEWORK

Intervention Logic	Indicators Indicate a target value for each indicator	Sources of Verification List the source of verification / information for each indicator
<p>Impact</p> <p>The overall goal of the Project is to improve women's lives and support the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups through integration of gender perspective at all stages of national and local policy-making and budgeting processes.</p>	<p>Indicator 1: # of international monitoring reports (UPR 3RD cycle, EU progress reports and WEF Gender Gap) showing progress in advancing gender equality in the period 2018-2022.</p> <p>Baseline: 2 reports (2017 EU progress report and WEF 2017 report) show positive progress in advancing gender equality.</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022: EU progress report, UPR 3rd cycle and WEF gender gap report show progress in advancing gender equality.</p> <p>Indicator 2: # of gender equality related SDG targets prioritized by the government</p> <p>Baseline: 0 gender SDG targets prioritized by the government</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022: at least 3 targets from SDG 5 and at least 10 other SDGs' gender targets prioritized by the government.</p>	<p>Data source: European Commission annual Country Report; UPR report; WEF Gender Gap Report; Annual government reports; National strategic documents on SDG localization</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review</p> <p>Frequency: every year</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers</p>

Intervention Logic	Indicators Indicate a target value for each indicator	Sources of Verification List the source of verification / information for each indicator
<p>Outcome 1 The Government's public finance management and the strategic planning processes respond to the different needs of women and men through effective application of gender responsive budgeting</p>	<p>Indicator 1.1. # of adopted or amended PFM legislation and government strategic planning documents that integrate gender perspective</p> <p>Baseline as of 2017: 0 amended legislation and strategic planning documents integrate gender perspective</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022: At least 3 adopted or amended legislation and strategic planning documents (Law on budgets, Budget Circular, Strategy for Public Administration and the Instructions for Strategic Planning) integrate gender perspective</p>	<p>Data source: Official Gazette; MoF website; www.ener.gov.mk</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review; Meeting with government officials and representatives of Ministry of Finance;</p> <p>Frequency and timeline: Annually, every January of the upcoming year</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers</p>
	<p>Indicator 1.2: System in place to track budgetary allocations for gender equality (directly responding to SDG indicator 5.c1.)</p> <p>Baseline as of 2017: No system in place to track budgetary allocations for gender equality</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022 the system will be in place to track budgetary allocations for gender equality</p>	<p>Data source: Official Gazette; MoF website;</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review, Questionnaires and face to face interviews with representatives of line ministries and state institutions.</p> <p>Frequency and timeline: Annually, every January of the upcoming year</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers, External experts/consultants</p>
	<p>Indicator 1.3: # of national and local strategies and sectoral policies that integrate gender equality priorities.</p> <p>Baseline as of 2017:</p> <p>a) 4 national strategies integrate gender equality priorities (NSGE, National strategy for local development and decentralization, Strategy for Eradication of Poverty and Social exclusion and Anti-discrimination strategy)</p> <p>b) 4 local strategies (GE Strategy of city of Skopje, GE Strategies of municipalities of Strumica, Bitola and Gjorce Petrov) integrate gender equality priorities</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022:</p> <p>a) at least 4 new national sectoral strategies (Strategy for rural development, Strategy for elimination of violence against women, Strategy for employment, new National Strategy for Gender equality) integrate gender equality priorities and budgetary allocations</p> <p>b) at least 10 local strategies or sectoral policies integrate gender equality priorities and budgetary allocations</p>	<p>Data source: Official Gazette www.ener.gov.mk Central and local government websites; Parliament web site, Minutes of public hearings in Parliaments</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review, Questionnaires and face to face interviews with representatives of line ministries and state institutions.</p> <p>Frequency and timeline: Annually, every January of the upcoming year</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers, External experts/consultants</p>

Intervention Logic	Indicators Indicate a target value for each indicator	Sources of Verification List the source of verification / information for each indicator
<p>Outcome 2: Civil society organizations, women, including the most vulnerable, actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and benefit from public policies and budgets.</p>	<p>Indicator 2.1: # of initiatives for budget monitoring (gender budget watch dog reports), advocacy and outreach/empowerment of women taken by civil society organizations and women, including the most vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Baseline as of 2017: 30 initiatives taken by civil society organizations and women, including the most vulnerable groups</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022: at least 60 initiatives taken by civil society organizations and women, including the most vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Data source: Media reports showing CSOs initiatives; CSOs reports produced; Minutes of the meetings of CSOs with Local governments; Experts reports; UN reports; Government reports.</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review; Public consultations; Interviews with CSOs; Focus group discussions and interviews with local communities.</p> <p>Frequency: Every six months</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers</p>
	<p>Indicator 2.2 # of measures funded by local self-government units to respond to priorities and needs voiced by women during participatory processes.</p> <p>Baseline as of 2017: 4 gender specific measures (Tetovo, Sveti Nikole, Strumica, and Bitola) and funds secured to respond to priorities and needs voiced by women during participatory processes as of 2018.</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022: at least 20 measures funded by local self-government units to respond to priorities and needs voiced by women during participatory processes</p>	<p>Data source: Local governments websites UN Women reports; Expert reports;</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review; Interviews and consultations with local officials;</p> <p>Frequency and timeline: Every six months</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers; External consultants/experts</p>
	<p>Indicator 2.3. # of beneficiaries (women and vulnerable groups) receiving direct support through municipal interventions and funds allocated for their empowerment</p> <p>Baseline as of 2017: 0 beneficiaries (women and vulnerable groups) receiving direct support through municipal interventions and funds allocated for their empowerment</p> <p>Target: at least 50 beneficiaries (women and vulnerable groups) receiving direct support through municipal interventions and funds allocated for their empowerment</p>	<p>Data source: Municipal websites and reports; Meeting minutes; Media articles; UN Women reports; Experts' reports; CSOs reports;</p> <p>Collection method: Meetings with local officials; Consultations with CSOs; Interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries.</p> <p>Frequency and timeline: Every six months</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers; External consultants/experts</p>

Intervention Logic	Indicators Indicate a target value for each indicator	Sources of Verification List the source of verification / information for each indicator
<p>Output 1.1: The MoF has the capacity to introduce gender perspective in the programme budgeting, as part of the Public Finance Management Reform</p>	<p>Indicator 1.1.1: # of initiatives/proposals taken by public officials for introducing gender perspective in programme budgeting documents</p> <p>Baseline in 2018: 0 initiatives/proposals taken by public officials for introducing gender perspective in programme budgeting documents</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2022: at least five initiatives taken by public officials for introducing gender perspective in programme budgeting documents</p>	<p>Data source: Ministry of Finance web sites; Government decisions; Official gazette; UN reports; UN Women reports;</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review Meetings and with representatives Ministry of Finance</p> <p>Frequency: Annually, every January of the upcoming year</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers</p>
	<p>Indicator 1.1.2: # of central budget users (line ministries/state institutions) that introduce on gender-responsive programme based budgeting</p> <p>Baseline in 2018: 0 central budget users (line ministries/state institutions) introduce gender-responsive programme based budgeting</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2021: at least 10 central budget users (line ministries/state institutions) introduce gender-responsive programme budgeting</p>	<p>Data source: Line ministries web sites; Training and workshop list of participants; Gender Equality mechanisms' reports; UN Women reports; Experts reports</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review questionnaires and face to face interviews with local self-government representatives</p> <p>Frequency: Annually;</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers</p>
	<p>Indicator 1.1.3: # of gender-sensitive citizen's budgets developed and published by the MoF</p> <p>Baseline in 2018: 0 gender-sensitive citizen's budgets developed and published by the MoF</p> <p>Target value(s) by the end of 2021: at least 2 gender-sensitive citizen's budgets developed and published by the MoF</p>	<p>Data source: Ministry of Finance web site; UN Women reports; Experts reports</p> <p>Collection method: Desk review</p> <p>Frequency: Annually;</p> <p>Responsibility: GRB Project Officers</p>

ANNEX 4:

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Documents	
Project documents	
1.	Project Document Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia'
2.	Donor Annual Reports 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
3.	Project Advisory Board Terms of Reference
4.	Project Advisory Board Meeting Minutes 2020, 2021, 2022
5.	Project biannual and annual work plans
Project products	
6.	Процена на напредокот и влијанието на Националната стратегија за родова еднаквост (НСРЕ) (2013-2020) и Националниот акциски план за родова еднаквост (НАПРЕ) (2018-2020)
7.	Минчева, Б, Апшостолова, О, Малеска Н. (2021) Анализа на прашалник за проценка на капацитетите и знаењата за примена на родово одговорно буџетирање во органите на државна управа на централно ниво
8.	Assessment Report on Capacity and Training Needs among LSGUs on Gender Responsive Budgeting
9.	Project fact sheet
10.	UN Women (2020) <i>Mapping the Impact of COVID-19 on the Socio-Economic Situation of Women at Local Level</i>
11.	UN Women (2020) <i>Rapid Gender Assessment: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men in North Macedonia</i>
12.	Recommendations for supporting women in agriculture and rural areas in response to challenges caused by COVID-19
13.	Поддршка на активен женски член во земјоделското домаќинство
14.	UN Women, Guide for gender Mainstreaming in the Strategic Plans of Line Ministries and Other State administration Bodies
15.	UN women, <i>Budget Choices in a Time of Pandemic: Advancing Gender Equality or Holding it Back? Country Report for North Macedonia</i>
16.	Родово Одговорно Буџетирање - leaflet
Other project related documents	
17.	Project document ZELS CFP No. 2019/002 UN Women Non-Core
18.	Project document Agora CFP No. 2020/02
19.	Project document NALAS
20.	Project document Akcija Zdruzenska CFP No. 2020/01
21.	Narrative progress report ZELS
22.	Project advisory board terms of reference
23.	Department for equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Project document
24.	Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food project document
Previous evaluations	
25.	UN Women (2019) Promoting gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe Regional Programme 2017-2019: Final Evaluation

Documents	
UN documents	
26.	UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025
27.	UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021
28.	UN Women Strategic Note 2019-2021
29.	UNEG, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance
30.	UN Disability Inclusion Strategy
31.	North Macedonia-United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development 2016-2020 Final Evaluation
32.	Common Country Analysis 2021-2025
33.	Draft UN Annual Report 2021
34.	UN Annual Report 2020
Laws, policies	
35.	Draft Organic Budget Law
36.	Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Article 12, Official Gazette No. 6/2012.
37.	Стратегија за родова еднаквост 2021-2026
38.	National Strategy on Agriculture and Rural development for the Period 2021-2027
39.	Стратегија за регионален развој на Република Северна Македонија 2021-2031
40.	Local strategies for gender equality of Skopje, Shtip, Ohrid, Kochani, Aerodrom, Bitola, Kriva Palanka
41.	Local analyses of the impact of COVID pandemic on GRB of municipalities of Veles, Sveti Nikole, STrumica, Shtip, Kriva Palanka, Kocani, Gostivar, Gjorche Petrov, Bitola, Aerodrom
42.	Програма за спроведување на стратегијата за регионален развој на Република Северна Македонија 2021-2024
Reports, studies	
43.	Budget Choices in a Time Of Pandemic: Advancing Gender Equality Or Holding It Back, UN Women, January 2021
44.	S. Gavric at al., <i>Gender Matters, Manual for Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Staff on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</i>
45.	State Statistical Office (2021) <i>Women and men in North Macedonia</i>
46.	USAID (2019) <i>North Macedonia Gender Analysis Report</i>
47.	OSCE (2019) <i>OSCE led survey on wellbeing and safety of women: North Macedonia Result Report</i>
48.	State Statistical Office and UNICEF. 2020. 2018-2019 North Macedonia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and 2018-2019 North Macedonia Roma Settlements Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Survey Findings Report. Skopje, North Macedonia: State Statistical Office and UNICEF.
49.	State Statistical Office (2015) Time use survey
50.	UN Women, Budget Choices In a Time Of Pandemic: Advancing Gender Equality Or Holding It Back, UN Women, January 2021
51.	UNDP-UN Women, <i>Gender Equality Index for North Macedonia 2019: Measuring Gender Equality</i>
52.	UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018-2019
53.	USAID (2019) <i>North Macedonia Gender Analysis Report</i>
54.	World Bank, World Bank Country Partnership Framework for RNM for 2019-2023, March 21, 2019
Other	
55.	OECD/DAC <i>Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance:</i> https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

ANNEX 5:


LIST OF INTERVIEWED

STAKEHOLDERS

Institution/organization	No. of persons
International stakeholders	
UN Women Regional Office	1
UN Women N. Macedonia	6
UNCT North Macedonia	2
SIDA	1
SDC	1
National governmental stakeholders	
Ministry of Finance	2
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - Department for Equal Opportunities	3
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy	1
State Audit Office	4
CSOs	
ZELS - Association of the Units of Local Self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia	1
NALAS - Network of Associations of Local Authorities in SEE	1
CEED	2
Center for Change Management Skopje	1
National Council for Gender Equality Macedonia	2
AGORA - Center for Promotion of Civic Values	1
Local self-governments – selfadminstrated questionnaire	
City of Skopje, Skopje – Aerodrom, Skopje - Gjorce Petrov, Skopje – Centar, Karpos, Bogdanci, Ohrid, Bitola, Sveti Nikole, Tetovo, Gostivar, Bogovinje, Shtip, Strumica, Kriva Palanka, Novaci, Kavadarci, Čaška, Struga, Vinica, Vevcani, Berovo, Vrapciste, Probistip, Tearce, Makedonski Brod, Brvenica, Demir Hisar	28
Experts and academia	
Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje	1
GRB experts/mentors	5
Local community Struga	
Local women - primary beneficiaries	3
Local community Bitola	
Local self-government	2
Local community Strumica	
Women’s organization Strumica	2
Women beneficiaries	6
Local community Demir Kapija	
Women’s Lobby Demir Kapija	3
Local community Shtip	
Local self-government	1
Local community Sveti Nikole	
Local self-government	4

ANNEX 6: EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

UN Women - International Consultant for the Final Evaluation of the “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”

Advertised on behalf of:  UN WOMEN

Location: Home-based with possible travel in North Macedonia), Republic of North Macedonia

Application Deadline: 22-Mar-22 (Midnight New York, USA)

Additional Category: Gender Equality

Type of Contract: Individual Contract

Post Level: International Consultant

Languages Required: English

Expected Duration of Assignment: Estimated 4 months for the period from March - July 2022

UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

UNDP does not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse, any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.

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; the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development; human rights; as well as humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women’s rights at the centre of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It provides strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States’ priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors.

UN Women Programme Office in the Republic of North Macedonia in line with the priorities set in the UN Women Strategic Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021-2025), is supporting the country to fulfil National and International commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women.

Over the past years, UN Women has provided extensive support to national and local stakeholders to strengthen democratic governance and advance women’s rights through initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender in policy planning and budgeting.

UN Women Programme Office in North Macedonia is implementing a four-year Project “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia” (2018-2022), funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The project supports Government stakeholders at central and local level on the implementation of gender responsive budgeting, and the civil society organizations and oversight bodies on strengthening the accountability towards gender equality commitments.

2. Description of the programme/project

2.1 Project strategy and key objectives

The project relies on past and ongoing efforts, lessons learned and good practices on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and responds to the increasing demand created for GRB expertise, knowledge and tools at both central and local level in the country.

At central level, the project applies strategies focused on engendering the Public Finance Management reform, to promote more inclusive and transparent governance, accountable to the needs and interests of women and men, including the most vulnerable groups. The project supports the longstanding vision of strong national gender machinery, which uses its full potential and has taken the lead in ensuring policies and laws fully embed gender equality principles and gender is mainstreamed in sectoral programmes of state institutions and line ministries.

At local level, the project interventions are focused on policies and budgets to improve the life of women and men from the most vulnerable groups, particularly by upscaling proven approaches and good practices identified in previous GRB interventions. Additionally, the project is further promoting the use of GRB as a tool to enable local governments to recognize the value and potential for local development and inclusive growth by investing in gender-responsive social services, specifically social protection and care services. The project applies a human-centered approach by finding solutions based on the needs identified by beneficiaries themselves, who act as agents of change.

CSO networking and advocacy efforts are supported to enable structured and continued oversight and analysis of budgetary allocation and spending from a gender perspective, as well as to generate missing watch dog evidence and expert policy recommendations. The interventions are backed-up with capacity building efforts for providers and users of gender data, statistics and its usage for evidence-based policy analyses and interventions.

Overall objective of the project is to improve women's lives and support the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups through systematic and sustainable integration of gender perspective at all stages of national and local policy-making and budgeting processes.

The project is focused on the following outcomes:

Outcome 1. The Government's public finance management and the strategic planning processes are improved to respond to the different needs of women and men as a result of effective application of gender responsive budgeting

Outcome 2. Civil society organizations, women, including the most vulnerable actively participate in planning and decision-making mechanisms, and their priorities are fully reflected in public policies and budgets.

Under the Outcome 1, new Organic Budget Law was adopted by the Government of North Macedonia (pending Parliamentary review and adoption) which for the first time includes gender equality among its key budgetary principles, while GRB provisions are incorporated in articles related to the financial plans/requests of the budget users. The new law is expected to improve accountability among budget users in terms of gender equality and to facilitate the process of mainstreaming gender into relevant secondary legislation and strategic and other operational documents linked to public finance management.

Important progress was made towards advancing GRB in the national strategic planning and policy making processes: new National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021-2026) was adopted by the Government which includes gender responsive budgeting among the key strategic objectives; the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (2021 – 2027) and the Strategy for Regional Development of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021 – 2031) for the first time include gender specific objectives and indicators.

The establishment of the first resource Centre of gender responsive policy making and budgeting was initiated under direct leadership of the Department for Equal Opportunities (DEO) at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), to serve as a knowledge hub for continued capacity development of public administration.

In addition, under the leadership of the DEO, line ministries were exposed to continuous capacity strengthening and expert support on gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and strategic planning by using GRB as a tool. With expert and mentoring support under the project, 14 institutions and 3 state agencies implemented the government methodology on GRB ensuring that gender specific budget allocations are made under selected sectoral programmes.

Through UN Women mentorship and capacity building support, local officials from 31 municipalities improved their capacities on mainstreaming gender in sectoral programmes and application of GRB tools in local planning and budgeting to respond to the needs of women and the most vulnerable, including the newly emerged Covid-19 related needs.

Furthermore, the project supported the Members of Parliament (MPs) to take initiatives to monitor and advocate for gender responsive policies and budgets. Members of Parliament were exposed to learning and capacity strengthening on gender responsive legislation and oversight of the national budget to better address the needs of women and men while the Parliamentary Institute received capacity building support on application of gender perspective in analytical and research papers for the MPs.

Under the Outcome 2, support was provided to civil society organizations to effectively carry outreach and awareness raising activities to increase active women's participation in public life and decision making. As a result of the advocacy efforts of grassroots CSOs supported within the project, needs and priorities of women and the most vulnerable have been closely considered in local programmes and budgets in 16 municipalities.

In addition, support was extended to project partner's initiatives for promoting gender mainstreaming in local governance and local service delivery, exchange of proven approaches and practices nationally and regionally, as well as expanding the availability of e-learning and online resource sharing on GRB. Through the Association of the local-self-government units in North Macedonia (ZELS), knowledge and skills on GRB were expanded among local policy makers and practitioners across the country while the Network of Associations of Local Authorities in SEE (NALAS) has advanced its e-learning course on Gender mainstreaming at local level by making it available for local governments in SEE.

Finally, number of policy and budget assessments were supported under the project, including in the context of COVID-19 and its impact on lives of women and men, at both central and local level.

2.2 Project beneficiaries and stakeholders

The target groups of the project include state institutions relevant for central and municipal budgeting processes, as well CSOs as important actors in empowering women and seeking accountability to gender equality:

(Outcome 1) Budget and finance unit in the Ministry of Finance as lead actors in the public finance management and the driver of the reforms towards programme and performance budgeting.

Finance units of central and local level budget users leading the process of budget preparation in line with the budget instructions, with the aim to equip them with the tools and skills for responding to the new programme budget requirements and capacities to formulate gender equality objectives and indicators for the budget programmes, sub-programmes and activities/projects and do better costing of the specific interventions.

Civil servants in select line ministries and local self-government units as key actors in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies given that they require further capacity development, mentoring in the integration of gender into public policy making and budgeting;

Gender Machinery in the country which includes the Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, line ministries' coordinators for equal opportunities and municipal coordinators for equal opportunities, as key actors and main drivers in mainstreaming gender in policy and budgetary processes given they require increased capacities to assume their role of drivers of change on gender equality.

MPs and Local Councillors as key actors for overseeing the implementation of gender equality legislation and strategies given that they require further support to recognize gender relevant issues in legislations, public policy and budgets and raise these issues in relevant fora.

(Outcome 2) CSOs as key actors in holding governments accountable to their commitments and advocating for women's needs in setting public policy goals given that they require further support to effectively use GRB tools in performing needs-based analysis, budget monitoring and advocacy.

Women and socially excluded groups have ultimate benefit from the project, through direct participation in policy planning and empowerment interventions, such as outreach and awareness raising and implementation of grant-schemes for women's grassroots organizations, with focus on the most excluded.

2.3 Project budget, geographical scope and timeframe

The project duration is from October 2018 until September 2022. Total project budget is USD 3,672,109.29; SDC contribution: USD 1,998,602.04; SIDA: USD 1,281,067.68; UN Women contribution: USD 392,439.57.

The project activities are being implemented in the Republic of North Macedonia.

In parallel, the project is implemented in synergy with the Regional UN Women GRB programme and benefits from regional initiatives implemented under the regional project.

2.4 Project Management

Operational Management

The Programme Presence Office team is providing overall technical, programme and operations management, oversight and quality assurance for project implementation and coordination and provision of administrative and operational support for the project. The project is managed through direct implementation of UN Women. The overall management responsibility and administration of the project rests with the North Macedonia Programme Presence supported technically by the Regional Office of UN Women for Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul.

The management structure is composed of a national team of: One country Programme Analyst (full time), two project coordinators (full time), Operations Associate (full time), administrative assistant (full time) and communications officer (full time). The project is envisaged as part of UN Women regional interventions on GRB and is closely advised by a regional technical advisor.

The familiarity and extensive experience with government procedures and working methods will help the project team mitigating potential challenges and obstacles to GRB implementation. The GRB project team will be the key provider of technical expertise in the field.

The Project Advisory Board

The Project Advisory Board (PAB) is established to monitor the progress of project implementation. The PAB provides high level technical support to assure that the project maintains its relevance in conforming to identified needs and priorities and responds to new developments in the country. The PAB acts as the main quality assurance body providing strategic and policy guidance to support the achievement of project results. The board consists of selected experts in the area of gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting, partners in the project, donor/s and other key stakeholders.

The project management structure ensures unremitted execution of the programme and the budget, close interactions among the team members and facilitates exchange of experience and learning. The structure allows team members to achieve open and effective communication and be able to achieve project results in close collaboration with project partners and stakeholders.

UN Women implements the project in close collaboration with key stakeholders, including gender equality mechanisms on both central and local level, line ministries, local self-government units, CSOs, Association of the units of local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS), Network of Association of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) and relevant state and academic institutions. UN Women signed cooperation agreements (Partner Agreements and MoUs) with the project stakeholders, which also act as responsible parties for the implementation of specific project components.

3. Evaluation Purpose and Use

3.1 Evaluation scope

The final evaluation of the project will be conducted during the final year of project implementation. The evaluation is scheduled between March 2022 and July 2022 (estimated 4 months).

The evaluation includes a data collection mission to Skopje and field visits/meetings in up to five selected local self-governments in North Macedonia. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation onsite data collection might need to be replaced by online data collection. This will be revisited and agreed with UN Women during the inception phase of the evaluation.

The evaluation shall cover all aspects of the project, and broadly allocate resources (time) in relation to the relative expenditure between the various project components.

3.2 Evaluation purpose

A final project evaluation will be conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the above described interventions from the point of view of **relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability**. The evaluation will not be able to fully assess the project performance, as some activities are still ongoing; however, it will address the following questions with the results and evidence that is available to date.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, organizational learning and accountability. The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at central and local levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to promote inclusive local and national economic development with a particular focus on rural women. The evaluation should also provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in next projects implemented by UN Women North Macedonia office, including interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact.

The evaluation will follow a participatory approach that will include a twofold management structure where all key partners will be represented and additional consultation with key stakeholders, governmental representatives from relevant ministries and national institutions, with local government representatives, with civil society representatives and active women's groups as well as key donor partners.

3.3 Evaluation objectives

The specific evaluation objectives include:

- Analyse the relevance and coherence of the project objectives, strategy and approach at the national and local levels for the Government support to comply with national and international gender equality commitments.
- Assess effectiveness of the project intervention on the target group across the two outcomes.
- Assess organizational efficiency and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the intervention.
- Assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in advancing gender equality in the target group.
- Analyse how human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the project implementation
- Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of gender mainstreaming and good governance.
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices.

4. Evaluation Management Structure

Evaluation Management Group

An Evaluation Management Group (EMG) will be conformed and will be the main decision-making body for the evaluation and is composed of UN Women project team members, UN Women North Macedonia Head of Office, and UN Women ECA RO Evaluation Specialist who will provide quality assurance support throughout the evaluation process. The EMG will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and will oversee the day to day business of the evaluation and communication with the Evaluation Team. UN Women North Macedonia representative will be responsible for day-to-day management of the evaluation and the coordination for the field visits, including logistical support.

Evaluation Reference Group

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established to ensure that the evaluation approach is relevant to stakeholders, and to make certain that factual errors or errors of omission or interpretation are identified in evaluation products. The reference group will provide input at key stages of the evaluation: inception report; draft and final reports. The ERG will be composed of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy, State Audit Office, local self-government units supported by the project, women CSOs representative and experts in gender responsive budgeting. The ERG will be consulted on key aspects of the evaluation process. The group will be composed to ensure that all relevant stakeholders' groups and perspectives are represented, including from CSOs.

Evaluation Approach, Methodology Criteria and Questions

The evaluation will assess progress and challenges for each of the two outcomes, with measurement of the specific results achievements and gaps and how and to what extent these have affected overall progress. It will consist of a desk review, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy, local self-governments units supported by the project, ZELS, NALAS, Academia and women's CSOs and grassroot organizations involved in project implementation or addressing the needs and representing the interests of specific groups of women.

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant stakeholders and partners in North Macedonia. The evaluation will follow gender equality and human rights principles, as defined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy [1] and adhere to the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system [2]. The evaluation methodology will employ mixed methods. A more detailed evaluation methodology will be proposed and agreed with the evaluation team and will be presented in the evaluation inception report.

The evaluation is a final project evaluation and 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 documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation analysis.
- Online consultations and discussions with the senior management and project management staff.
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other stakeholders.
- Field visits to and observation at selected project sites.

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The proposed approach and methodology has to be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final requirements, and the evaluators will have an opportunity to make their inputs and propose changes in the evaluation design. The methodology and approach should, however, incorporate human rights and gender equality perspectives. It is expected that the Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report. The evaluation will include Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability and Impact criteria. More specifically, the evaluation will address the following evaluation questions that will be further refined once the evaluation team is recruited [3]:

- To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? Was the choice of interventions relevant to the situation of the target group?
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with the key national policy and strategic documents in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, and reflect national/subnational priorities and commitments on GRB?
- To what extent key stakeholders were involved in programme's conceptualization and design process?
- To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
- To what extent is the intervention aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment?
- To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to gender equality priorities in the country? Does the project address the needs and priorities of women in Republic of North Macedonia?
- To what extent project contributed to advancing the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda?

Coherence

Internal coherence

- To what extent does the project fit within UN Women's Strategic Plan and interrelated three-fold mandate and UN Women's work in North Macedonia?
- Are there any synergies and inter-linkages between the project and other interventions of UN Women in North Macedonia and the Western Balkan Region?
- External coherence
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national development strategies in the area of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and reflect national priorities and commitments on GE?
- How does project reflect and align with national strategic plans and normative frameworks and North Macedonia's international obligations and commitments in the field of women's rights and gender equality?
- To what extent the project is in complementarity, harmonized and coordinated with the interventions of other actors' interventions in the same context?
- To what extent the implementation of the project ensures synergies and coordination with Government's and key partners' relevant efforts while avoiding duplications?
- What is UN Women's comparative advantage in North Macedonia to implement this project?
- To what extent is the project aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in North Macedonia?

Effectiveness:

- To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
- What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
- How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results?
- How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?
- To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies innovative for implementation of GRB in North Macedonia? What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of the results?
- Is there a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by all parties involved?

Efficiency:

- Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
- Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? Where does accountability lie?
- Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent are the project monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?
- Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) identified in the implementation of the different actions and what level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?
- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
- To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance?
- How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
- What steps were taken to develop and/or reinforce the operating capacities of national partners during the implementation of the programme?
- To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
- To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?
- How effectively has project contributed to the establishment of effective partnerships and development of national capacities?

Gender Equality and Human Rights

- How did the broader human rights context within the country inform the design and implementation of the project?
- To what extent participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights holders and duty bearers) was maximized in the project's planning, design, implementation and decision?
- To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?
- To what extent HRBA and gender transformative approaches have incorporated into the design, monitoring and reporting of the project?

The above questions are expected to be revised and refined by the evaluation team during the inception phase of the evaluation. It is also expected that the evaluation team will develop an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the evaluation questions, the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means for verification as a tool for the evaluation. Final evaluation matrix will be approved in the evaluation inception report.

6. Evaluation Process, duties and responsibilities of the Evaluation Team

6.1 Evaluation process

The evaluation process is divided in five phases:

1. **Preparation**, mainly devoted to structuring the evaluation approach, preparing the TOR, compiling programme documentation, and hiring the evaluation company;
2. **Inception**, which will involve 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, including in-depth desk research, in-depth review of the project documents and monitoring frameworks, online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits;
4. **Data analysis and reporting stage**, focusing on data analyzed, interpretation of findings and drafting and validation of an evaluation report; and
5. **Dissemination, follow-up and use**, once the evaluation is completed UN Women is responsible for the development of a Management Response, publishing of the evaluation report, uploading the published report on the GATE website, and the dissemination of evaluation findings.

The outline above corresponds to the entire evaluation process from preparation, to conduct, reporting and follow up and use. The evaluation team will only be responsible for the inception, data collection and data analysis and reporting phase. Evaluation preparation and dissemination, follow up and use will be responsibility of EMG.

Duties and Responsibilities

Expected deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver:

- **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:** Online presentation of the preliminary findings (date TBD), 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 in a format preferably adjustable for individual project sites both in English and Macedonian.

Payment will be issued in two instalments upon the satisfactory submission of the deliverables cleared by the evaluation task manager to certify that the services have been satisfactorily performed:

40% upon approval of evaluation inception report

60% upon the validation of the final evaluation report and communication products.

8.2 Evaluation time frame

The project evaluation will be conducted between March 2022 and July 2022. The preliminary calendar for the process is detailed in the table below.

Task	Tentative timeframe deadline	Est no days international consultant	Est no of days national consultant
Inception phase March-April 2022			
Desk review of background documentation	5 April 2022	3	2
Inception meeting with EMG	15 April 2022	1	1
Inception report (including two rounds of revision)	30 April 2022	5	4
Data collection phase May-June 2022			
Documents review, (online) interviews	5 May 2022	3	3
Visit to project sites [1]	5 June 2022	5	5
Analysis and reporting phase June-July 2022			
Drafting and presentation of preliminary findings (including one round of revision)	25 June 2022	3	3
Preparation and submission of report (including two rounds of revision)	5 July 2022	10	5
Review and submission of final report and communication products (PPT and a brief)	30 July 2022	5	2
Total		35	25

Competencies

Core Values:

Integrity - Demonstrate consistency in upholding and promoting the values of UN Women in actions and decisions, in line with the UN Code of Conduct.

Professionalism - Demonstrate professional competence and expert knowledge of the pertinent substantive areas of work.

Cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity - Demonstrate an appreciation of the multicultural nature of the organization and the diversity of its staff. Additionally, the individual should have an international outlook, appreciating difference in values and learning from cultural diversity

Competencies:

- Sensitivity and adaptability to culture, gender, religion, nationality and age
- 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

Required Skills and Experience

- At least a Master's degree in economics, social sciences, international relations, gender studies or a related area. A Bachelor's degree may be accepted with +2 years' experience.
- At least 7 years international experience in 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 utilizing participatory approaches and methodologies;
- Experience in gender equality and women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis

Language:

- Proficiency in written and spoken English language;
- Knowledge of Macedonian language will be considered an asset.

Application procedure:

The following documents should be submitted as part of the application:

- **Cover letter** to include a brief overview in English (unedited text) about which of your previous experiences makes you the most suitable candidate for the advertised position.
- **P11** with past experience in similar assignments; can be downloaded at <http://www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment>, a signed copy should be submitted.
- **Financial Proposal** specifying a total lump sum amount for the tasks specified in this Terms of Reference. The financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (daily rate and number of anticipated working days and other possible costs, travel cost excluded). *Possible field visits will be arranged and covered by UN Women in accordance with the Covid 19 travel restrictions.*

Evaluation of applicants:

Consultants will be evaluated using a cumulative analysis method taking into consideration the combination of qualifications and financial proposal. Contract will be awarded to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

1. Responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
2. Having received the highest score out of below defined technical and financial criteria.

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 49 points in the technical evaluation would be considered for financial evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria		Max points
TECHNICAL EVALUATION (70%)		
Language Requirements	Fluency in written and spoken English Language	REQUIRED
Education	Master's degree in economics, social sciences, international relations, gender studies or a related area.	20 0: without relevant master's degree 20: Master's degree
Professional experience	International experience in conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects.	20 0: without 7 years of experience 15: 7 years of experience 20: more than 7 years of experience
	Proven experience of designing and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights-based evaluations utilizing participatory approaches and methodologies.	10 0: without relevant experience 10: relevant experience
	Experience and knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis.	10 0: without relevant experience 10: relevant experience
	Excellent analytical, facilitation and communications skills and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders.	10 0: without relevant experience 10: relevant experience
Total technical		70

Financial Evaluation (30%) – max. 30 points:

The maximum number of points assigned to the financial proposal is allocated to the **lowest price** proposal. All other price proposals receive points in inverse proportion. A suggested formula is as follows:

$$p = 30 (\mu/z)$$

Using the following values:

p = points for the financial proposal being evaluated

μ = price of the lowest priced proposal

z = price of the proposal being evaluated

Evaluation TOR Annexes

1. UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluations [1]
2. UNEG Ethical Guidelines[2]
3. UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System[3]
4. UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System[4]
5. UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender in the UN System[5]
6. UN Women Evaluation Handbook[6]
7. National Strategy on Gender Equality 2013-2020, and National Action Plan on Gender equality (2018-2020) [7]
8. Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men[8]
9. How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation. Evaluation Handbook[9]
10. Final Evaluation of the programme “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe” in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova[10]

At UN Women, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment of mutual respect. UN Women recruits, employs, trains, compensates, and promotes regardless of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, national origin, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, competence, integrity and organizational need.

If you need any reasonable accommodation to support your participation in the recruitment and selection process, please include this information in your application.

UN Women has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UN Women, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to UN Women’s policies and procedures and the standards of conduct expected of UN Women personnel and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. (Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.)

[1] <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

[2] <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

[3] <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

[4] <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22>

[5] <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

[6] <http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook>

[7] <https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/dokumenti.nspix>

[8] https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/9677/file/NMAC_on%20Equal%20Opportunities%20of%20Women%20and%20Men.pdf

[9] www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation

[10] <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11388>.

ANNEX 7: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In this annex initial version of instruments is presented. They will be further refined to better suit the concrete informants.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR UN WOMEN NORTH MACEDONIA

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organization:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project ***“Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”*** implemented in the period 2018-2022.

We are external/independent team of evaluators engaged by UN Women. (Evaluators introduce themselves)

This evaluation aims to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the Project in order to assess relevance of the project to the North Macedonian context, effectiveness of the strategies applied, capture the results, identify key enabling and hindering factors in implementation and support organisational learning. Coordination with national counterparts and other development agencies is also observed.

Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

Considering your position in UN Women and the Project, your perspective is extremely valuable. UN Women is in no way influencing this evaluation.

Any information that you provide to us will be held confidential - including our notes of this interview. We will not attribute any specific comments or information to you or your organization. We are taking notes for our own use, but we are not otherwise recording this conversation.

BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the organization, how long you have held the role and what is your role in the Project?

RELEVANCE

2. How were the needs of Project target groups and beneficiaries captured prior to project design?
 - a) Is the choice of partners most relevant to the situation of women and marginalized groups and to achieve GEWE?
 - b) Which groups is the project reaching the most, and are any underserved?
3. To what extent project beneficiaries were involved in the Project design?
4. To what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to gender equality priorities in the country?
5. To what extent is the Project aligned with international commitments?
 - a) Please, try to more precisely describe to which CEDAW obligations project contributes?
 - b) To which Beijing priorities the Project contributes?
 - c) How it contributes to the EU Gender Equality Acquis?
 - d) To what extent is the Project aligned with nationalized SDGs?
6. How was relevance ensured after COVID-19 pandemic outbreak?
7. Is it the project still relevant? In which way?

COHERENCE

8. To what extent is the Project aligned with UN strategic priorities in North Macedonia?
 - a) How is aligned with SDCF?
 - b) How is Aligned with UN Women strategic priorities and mandates?
 - c) Are there any synergies and inter-linkages between the project and other interventions of UN Women in North Macedonia and the Western Balkan Region?
 - d) Are there any synergies with interventions of other UN agencies in North Macedonia?
9. To what extent the project is in complementarity, harmonized and coordinated with the interventions of external, non-UN interventions?
 - a) To what extent the implementation of the project ensures synergies and coordination with Government's and key partners' relevant efforts while avoiding duplications?
 - b) To what extent is in complementarity with other development partners' interventions?
10. What is UN Women's comparative advantage in North Macedonia to implement this project?

EFFECTIVENESS

11. To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
12. How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results?
 - a) How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?
 - b) To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies innovative for implementation of GRB in North Macedonia?
 - c) What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of the results?
13. What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results?
 - a) Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom?
 - b) What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
 - c) Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) identified in the implementation of the different actions and what level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?

EFFICIENCY

14. Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
15. Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results?
 - a) Where does accountability lie?
 - b) Is there a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by all parties involved?
16. How efficient was the monitoring system?
 - a) To what extent are the project monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets?
 - b) To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?
17. To what degree does UN Women team have access to the necessary skills, knowledge and capacities needed to deliver? How are ECA RO contribute to capacity development?

IMPACT

18. What are the areas of achieved or potential measurable impact of the Project? What is the impact on the target groups and beneficiaries at individual, community and institutional/system levels?
19. How project impacts or is likely to impact women end beneficiaries and the most vulnerable groups?

SUSTAINABILITY

20. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
 - a) To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance?
 - b) How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
 - c) How effectively has project contributed to the establishment of effective partnerships and development of national capacities? To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance?
21. To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?
22. What is the likelihood that the results achieved for those most vulnerable will be sustained after the phase out?
23. What are your recommendations for the next phase of the Project?

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

24. To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
25. To what extent is LNOB principle integrated in the approach?
26. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR UN WOMEN REGIONAL OFFICE

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organization:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project “*Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia*” implemented in the period 2018-2022.

We are external/independent team of evaluators engaged by UN Women. (Evaluators introduce themselves)

This evaluation aims to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the Project in order to assess relevance of the project to the North Macedonian context, effectiveness of the strategies applied, capture the results, identify key enabling and hindering factors in implementation and support organisational learning. Coordination with national counterparts and other development agencies is also observed.

Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

Considering your position in UN Women and the Project, your perspective is extremely valuable. UN Women is in no way influencing this evaluation.

Any information that you provide to us will be held confidential - including our notes of this interview. We will not attribute any specific comments or information to you or your organization. We are taking notes for our own use, but we are not otherwise recording this conversation.

BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the organization, how long you have held the role and what is your experience/role with the Project?

RELEVANCE

2. In your opinion how relevant is the Project to the UN Women strategic priorities in the Western Balkans and in broader region?
3. How the Project contributes to the alignment of North Macedonia to key international obligations in the area of gender equality?
4. Is the Project still relevant and in your opinion are there ways to strengthen project relevance in the current context?

COHERENCE

5. How the Project aligns with other UN Women initiatives in the region?
6. What is UN Women comparative advantage in regard to the GRB compared to other donors?

EFFECTIVENESS

7. According to your information, how effective was the project in North Macedonia? If you compare it to other countries, how would you evaluate the project effectiveness as average, below or above average? On what evidence you based that impression?
8. To your knowledge, what are the enabling or hindering factors for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results?
9. Are there any capacity building initiatives in the areas relevant to GRB that UN Women regional office implements for national teams?
 - a) What would these be? How often they are implemented?
 - b) What are their results?

IMPACT

10. What could be done further to increase capacities of country teams to have more prominent role or more effective engagement in promoting GM of policies and GRB in their countries?

SUSTAINABILITY

11. Are there any initiatives in the Regional Office to replicate, disseminate good practices, and support experience sharing between country teams?
12. Are there other ways to support country teams to increase likelihood of sustainability of results related to GRB projects?
13. What are your recommendations for future UN Women programming related to GM and GRB?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DONORS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organization:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project “*Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia*” implemented in the period 2018-2022.

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Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

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BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the organization, how long you have held the role and
2. What is your experience/role with the Project during design, implementation and dissemination?

RELEVANCE

3. In your opinion how relevant is the Project to the key gender equality issues and needs of women, including the most vulnerable?
4. How Project is relevant for the normative and institutional framework for GE in North Macedonia?

COHERENCE

5. How this project complements the development cooperation program/strategy of your agency?
6. Compared to other international partners what would be specific capacities and potential advantages of UN Women to engage in GB and GRB interventions?

EFFECTIVENESS

7. According to your information, how effective was the project? Did you have the opportunity to find out about Project results? How?

IMPACT

8. Did you have the opportunity to see some impact of the Project? Please explain?

SUSTAINABILITY

9. What would you say about the sustainability of the project? Do you have any insights and opinions about that?
10. Are there any recommendations for future UN Women programming related to GM and GRB that come to your mind from your experience working in GE area and working in the context of North Macedonia?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY, DEPARTMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organization:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project ***“Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”*** implemented in the period 2018-2022.

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Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

Considering your position in UN Women and the Project, your perspective is extremely valuable. UN Women is in no way influencing this evaluation.

Any information that you provide to us will be held confidential - including our notes of this interview. We will not attribute any specific comments or information to you or your organization. We are taking notes for our own use, but we are not otherwise recording this conversation.

Please, keep in mind that all your opinions, thoughts and experiences should be related to this project and not to other similar projects and initiatives unless we ask about them explicitly.

BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the institution, how long you have held the role and what is your role in the Project implemented by UN Women?

RELEVANCE

2. In your opinion to what extent the Project is relevant for the needs of your Ministry/Department regarding its role in promoting gender equality?
3. Was your Ministry/DEO involved in the Project design?
4. What do you think, to what extent was the design of the project relevant to gender equality priorities in the country?
5. To what extent is the Project aligned with North Macedonia international commitments?
 - a) Please, try to more precisely describe to which CEDAW obligations project contributes?
 - b) To which Beijing priorities Project contributes?
 - c) How it contributes to the EU Gender Equality Acquis?
 - d) To what extent is the Project aligned with nationalized SDGs?

6. How was relevance ensured after COVID-19 pandemic outbreak?
7. Is it the project still relevant? In which way?
8. How it is relevant for your Ministry/DEO?
 - a) Are there any components missing in the Project that would suit better your Ministry/DEO in its needs to increase capacities for GM and GRB? What would that be?
 - b) Was there anything that was implemented with participation of your Ministry/DEO that was not particularly relevant for its mandate/work?
 - c) What would be needed for your Ministry/DEO in the future to further strengthen capacities and practices of GM and GRB? Please try to be precise as possible.

COHERENCE

9. To what extent is the Project complementary to other initiatives, processes regarding gender equality in your Ministry/DEO?
10. How would you compare UN Women to other donors in regard to the engagement in GM and GRB? Are they in some ways specific? How?

EFFECTIVENESS

11. What would you note as biggest achievements of the Project from the perspective of Ministry/DEO is in focus?
 - a) Please be specific in listing the achievements
 - b) What were factors that enabled such achievements?
12. What would you note as shortcomings in regard to your Ministry/DEO?
 - a) Please be specific in describing the shortcomings
 - b) What were factors that influenced such shortcomings?
13. Were there any surprises, unexpected results?
 - a) Which ones?
 - b) How and why they occurred?
14. How would you evaluate implemented strategies from the perspective of your Ministry/DEO?
 - a) Would you find some better ways to work on the same issues than it was done by the Project?
 - b) What would these strategies be?
15. In your knowledge, did results reached the most vulnerable women or groups in the country?
 - a) Could you provide some examples?
 - b) If not, what should be done in order to reach the most excluded and vulnerable?

EFFICIENCY

16. How would you evaluate the communication with Project team? How it was organized?
17. Were responsibilities and roles clear?
18. Were activities timely implemented?
19. If not, what were the reasons?
20. Were resources (personnel, financial, time and organizational) for your participation and roles sufficient to participate in the project smoothly? If not, please describe which resources would be needed in the future for your more active/smooth engagement in such project?

IMPACT

21. What is the impact of the Project on competences of your Ministry/DEO regarding GM and GRB?
22. What is the impact on procedures, methods, tools of work in these areas?

SUSTAINABILITY

23. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
24. What are your recommendations for the next phase of the Project?

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

25. To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
26. To what extent is LNOB principle integrated in the approach?
27. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organization:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project ***“Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”*** implemented in the period 2018-2022.

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Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

Considering your position in UN Women and the Project, your perspective is extremely valuable. UN Women is in no way influencing this evaluation.

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Please, keep in mind that all your opinions, thoughts and experiences should be related to this project and not to other similar projects and initiatives unless we ask about them explicitly.

BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the institution, how long you have held the role and what is your role in the Project?

RELEVANCE

2. In your opinion to what extent the Project is relevant for the needs of your institution regarding its role in promoting gender equality?
3. Was your institution involved in the Project design?
4. What do you think, to what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to gender equality priorities in the country?
5. Is it the project still relevant? In which way?
6. How it is relevant for your institution/organization?
 - a) Are there any components missing in the Project that would suit better your institution in its needs to increase capacities for GM and GRB? What would that be?
 - b) Was there anything that was implemented with participation of your institution that was not particularly relevant for its mandate/work?
 - c) What would be needed for your institution in the future to further strengthen capacities and practices of GM and GRB? Please try to be precise as possible.

COHERENCE

7. To what extent is the Project complementary to other initiatives, processes regarding gender equality in your institution role?
8. How would you compare UN Women to other donors in regard to the engagement in GM and GRB? Are they in some ways specific? How?

EFFECTIVENESS

9. What would you note as biggest achievements of the Project when your institution is in focus?
 - a) Please be specific in listing the achievements
 - b) What were factors that enabled such achievements?
10. What would you note as shortcomings in regard to your institution's role?
 - a) Please be specific in describing the shortcomings
 - b) What were factors that influenced such shortcomings?
11. Were there any surprises, unexpected results?
 - a) Which ones?
 - b) How and why they occurred?
12. How would you evaluate implemented strategies from the perspective of your institution and its mandate?
 - a) Would you find some better ways to work on the same issues than it was done by the Project?
 - b) What would these strategies be?
13. In your knowledge, did results reached the most vulnerable women or groups in the country?
 - a) Could you provide some examples?
 - b) If not, what should be done in order to reach the most excluded and vulnerable?

EFFICIENCY

14. How would you evaluate the communication with Project team? How it was organized?
15. Were responsibilities and roles clear?
16. Were activities timely implemented?
17. If not, what were the reasons?
18. Were resources (personnel, financial, time and organizational) for your participation and roles sufficient to participate in the project smoothly? If not, please describe which resources would be needed in the future for your more active/smooth engagement in such project?

IMPACT

19. What is the impact of the Project on competences of your institution regarding GM and GRB?
20. What is the impact on procedures, methods, tools of work in these areas?

SUSTAINABILITY

21. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
22. What are your recommendations for the next phase of the Project?

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

23. To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
24. To what extent is LNOB principle integrated in the approach?
25. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organization:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project ***“Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”*** implemented in the period 2018-2022.

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Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

Considering your position in UN Women and the Project, your perspective is extremely valuable. UN Women is in no way influencing this evaluation.

Any information that you provide to us will be held confidential - including our notes of this interview. We will not attribute any specific comments or information to you or your organization. We are taking notes for our own use, but we are not otherwise recording this conversation.

Please, keep in mind that all your opinions, thoughts and experiences should be related to this project and not to other similar projects and initiatives unless we ask about them explicitly.

BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the LSG, how long you have held the role and what is your role in the Project?

RELEVANCE

2. In your opinion to what extent the Project is relevant for the needs of your LSG regarding its role in promoting gender equality?
3. Was your LSG involved in the Project design?
4. What do you think, to what extent was the design of the intervention relevant to gender equality priorities in your local community?
5. Is it the project still relevant? In which way? What is the relevance in COVID context?
6. How it is relevant for your LSG?
 - a) Are there any components missing in the Project that would suit better your institution/organization in its needs to increase capacities for GM and GRB? What would that be?
 - b) Was there anything that was implemented with participation of your institution/organization that was not particularly relevant for its mandate/work?
 - c) What would be needed for your institution/organization in the future to further strengthen capacities and practices of GM and GRB? Please try to be precise as possible.

COHERENCE

7. To what extent is the Project complementary to other initiatives, processes regarding gender equality in your community?
8. How would you compare UN Women to other donors in regard to the engagement in GM and GRB? Are they in some ways specific? How?

EFFECTIVENESS

9. What would you note as biggest achievements of the Project when your local community is in focus?
 - a) Please be specific in listing the achievements
 - b) What were factors that enabled such achievements?
10. What would you note as shortcomings in regard to your local community?
 - a) Please be specific in describing the shortcomings
 - b) What were factors that influenced such shortcomings?
11. Were there any surprises, unexpected results?
 - a) Which ones?
 - b) How and why they occurred?
12. How would you evaluate implemented strategies from the perspective of your institution and its mandate?
 - a) Would you find some better ways to work on the same issues than it was done by the Project?
 - b) What would these strategies be?
13. In your knowledge, did results reached the most vulnerable women or groups in the country/community?
 - a) Could you provide some examples?
 - b) If not, what should be done in order to reach the most excluded and vulnerable?

EFFICIENCY

14. How would you evaluate the communication with Project team? How it was organized?
15. Were responsibilities and roles clear?
16. Were activities timely implemented?
17. If not, what were the reasons?
18. Were resources (personnel, financial, time and organizational) for your participation and roles sufficient to participate in the project smoothly? If not, please describe which resources would be needed in the future for your more active/smooth engagement in such project?

IMPACT

19. What is the impact of the Project on competences of your LSG regarding GM and GRB?
20. What is the impact on your local community?
 - a) What is the impact on local institutions (educational, employment, social protection)?
 - b) What is the impact on women from different groups, including the most vulnerable?
 - c) What is the impact on local development in your municipality?
21. What is the impact on procedures, methods, tools of work in these areas?

SUSTAINABILITY

22. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
23. What would be the main obstacles for sustainability of GM and GRB in your LSGU?
24. What are your recommendations for the next phase of the Project?

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

25. To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
26. To what extent is LNOB principle integrated in the approach?
27. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organisation:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project ***“Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”*** implemented in the period 2018-2022.

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Findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will also inform future programming of UN Women in North Macedonia. In addition to interviews with UN Women, national and local governments’ representatives, CSOs, media and experts participating in the project, we analyse broad spectrum of documentation produced by the project and the institutions and organisations involved.

Considering your position in UN Women and the Project, your perspective is extremely valuable. UN Women is in no way influencing this evaluation.

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BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your role in the organization, how long you have held the role?
2. What is your experience with/role in the Project?

RELEVANCE

3. In your opinion to what extent the Project is relevant for the needs women in North Macedonia?
4. Was Project relevant for needs of institutions so they can increase capacities to deliver more effectively GE?
5. How it is relevant for domain of work of your organization?
 - a) Are there any components missing in the Project that would suit better your organization or beneficiaries of your organization? What would that be?
 - b) Was there anything that was implemented with participation of your organization that was not particularly relevant for your work or your beneficiaries?
 - c) What would be needed for your organization or your beneficiaries in the future to further promote GEEW? Please try to be precise as possible.

COHERENCE

6. To what extent is the Project complementary to other CSOs initiatives (yours and others) related to GEEW?
7. How would you compare UN Women to other donors in regard to the engagement in GM and GRB? Are they in some ways specific? How?

EFFECTIVENESS

8. What would you note as biggest achievements of the Project when your organization (and local community – for local CSOs) is in focus?
 - a) Please be specific in listing the achievements
 - b) What were factors that enabled such achievements?
9. What would you note as shortcomings in regard to your organization role (and your local community)?
 - a) Please be specific in describing the shortcomings
 - b) What were factors that influenced such shortcomings?
10. Were there any surprises, unexpected results?
 - a) Which ones?
 - b) How and why they occurred?
11. How would you evaluate implemented strategies?
 - a) Would you find some better ways to work on the same issues than it was done by the Project?
 - b) What would these strategies be?
12. In your knowledge, did results reached the most vulnerable women or groups in the country/community?
 - a) Could you provide some examples?
 - b) If not, what should be done in order to reach the most excluded and vulnerable?

EFFICIENCY

13. How would you evaluate the communication with Project team? How it was organized?
14. Were responsibilities and roles clear?
15. Were activities timely implemented?
16. If not, what were the reasons?
17. Were resources (personnel, financial, time and organizational) for your participation and roles sufficient?

IMPACT

18. What is the impact of the Project on competences of your organization regarding GM and GRB?
19. What is the impact on your beneficiaries/local community?

SUSTAINABILITY

20. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
21. What are your recommendations for the next phase of the Project?

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

22. To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
23. To what extent is LNOB principle integrated in the approach?
24. To what extent disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EXPERTS / CONSULTANTS

Date:

Name of Interviewee:

Position held in organization:

Organisation:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you for your time and readiness to contribute to this evaluation process. This interview will inform the final evaluation of the Project **“Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”** implemented in the period 2018-2022.

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BACKGROUND

1. Please briefly describe your engagement with UN Women and the Project?

RELEVANCE

2. What are the key needs and priorities of women in North Macedonia? How does the Project respond to them?
3. What are the key needs and priorities of institutions at national level and local self-governments in North Macedonia to be able to systematically conduct GM and GRB? How does the Project respond to these needs?
4. To what extent the Project is relevant to international obligations of North Macedonia in GEEW area? To SDGs? EU Accession?
5. To what extent the Project is relevant to national priorities in GEEW area?

COHERENCE

6. To what extent is the Project complementary to other initiatives related to GEEW?
7. How would you compare UN Women to other donors in regard to the engagement in GM and GRB? Are they in some ways specific? How?
8. To what extent the project intervention continues to be relevant for the situation of gender equality and needs of relevant stakeholders? How was relevance ensured after covid-19 pandemic outbreak? What else should be done to strengthen the project relevance in the current context?
9. What would you note as biggest achievements of the Project from your perspective and experience?
 - a) Please be specific in listing the achievements
 - b) What were factors that enabled such achievements?

10. What would you note as shortcomings?
 - c) Please be specific in describing the shortcomings
 - d) What were factors that influenced such shortcomings?
11. Were there any surprises, unexpected results?
 - e) Which ones?
 - f) How and why they occurred?
12. How would you evaluate implemented strategies from the perspective of engagement?
 - g) Would you find some better ways to work on the same issues than it was done by the Project?
 - h) What would these strategies be?
13. In your knowledge, did results reached the most vulnerable women or groups in the country/community?
 - i) Could you provide some examples?
 - j) If not, what should be done in order to reach the most excluded and vulnerable?

EFFICIENCY

14. Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
15. Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results?
 - e) Where does accountability lie?
 - f) Is there a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by all parties involved
16. How efficient was the monitoring system?
 - g) To what extent are the project monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets?
 - h) To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?
17. To what degree does UN Women team have access to the necessary skills, knowledge and capacities needed to deliver? How are ECA RO contribute to capacity development?

IMPACT

18. What are the areas of achieved or potential measurable impact of the Project? What is the impact on the target groups and beneficiaries at individual, community and institutional/system levels?
19. How project impacts or is likely to impact women end beneficiaries and the most vulnerable groups?

SUSTAINABILITY

20. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
 - i) To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance?
 - j) How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
 - k) How effectively has project contributed to the establishment of effective partnerships and development of national capacities? To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and good governance?
21. What is the likelihood that the results achieved for those most vulnerable will be sustained after the phase out?
22. What are your recommendations for the next phase of the Project?

GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

23. To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
24. To what extent is LNOB principle integrated in the approach?
25. To what extend disability inclusion was integrated in project planning and implementation?

FGD GUIDE FOR WOMEN FINAL BENEFICIARIES

Date:

Place:

Number of women:

Profile of women:

Interviewers:

OPENING STATEMENT

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1. **Women’s needs and gender equality issues:** What are the key challenges women face in your community compared to men?
2. **(Local) Policies and measures:**
 - a. Are you familiar with any plans/measures (local) government attempts to improve situation regarding these challenges?
 - b. What is that (local) government doing well in improving the situation regarding these issues?
 - c. What is not so good and should be done better?
3. **Responsiveness and accountability:**
 - a. Do you have opportunity to communicate with (local) government on behalf of your or other women’s needs?
 - b. How was your experience in that?
 - c. Are you informed about how money is spent in your local community?
 - d. Are there organizations in your community that particularly advocate for women’s rights and provide support to women?
 - e. Are you in contact with them, how?
 - f. Do they inform you on what government has been doing in order to improve position and lives of women?
4. **Project awareness:**
 - a. Did you hear about the Project? How and what?
 - b. Did you participate in any activities related to the Project?
 - c. How would you describe the importance of the project?
 - d. Are there any benefits for women that Project brought? Which ones?

STANDARDIZED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS

Gender responsive budgeting in LSGs – questionnaire for the evaluation of UN Women project “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia” (2018-2022)

The survey on implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting is a part of the evaluation of the project implemented by UN Women in North Macedonia ‘Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia’ (2018-2022). The project was implemented in a number of municipalities and your LSG is selected for the survey either as project beneficiary or as municipality which was not participating in the project in order to compare the effects of project interventions. Any information that you provide to us will be held confidential. We will not attribute any specific comments or information to you or your LSG. Thank you for your time and efforts to contribute to this evaluation.

Municipality:

Person filing the questionnaire:

Name:

Position:

Contact:

1. Is there actual (not expired) Gender Equality action plan/strategy in your municipality?
2. Please, list key priorities from the GE action plan/strategy:
3. Is there local (sustainable) development action plan/strategy in your municipality?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. If yes, please provide information on the period which strategy/AP covers?
5. Is there specific gender equality outcome/objective in the local development AP/strategy?
 - a. Yes, (please cite it) _____
 - b. No
6. Are there gender specific indicators for objectives/outcomes of the development AP/strategy?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. What would you say, how much are other sectoral actual local APs/strategies gender mainstreamed? Please roughly estimate out of total number of local APs/strategies what is percentage of those that are gender mainstreamed?
 - a. Less than 25%
 - b. Between 25% and 50%
 - c. Between 51% and 75%
 - d. More than 75%
8. What would you say, how many of the actual local policies define gender responsive budgetary allocations? Please roughly estimate out of total number of local policies what is percentage of those that are gender mainstreamed?
 - a. Less than 25%
 - b. Between 25% and 50%
 - c. Between 51% and 75%
 - d. More than 75%
9. Is there procedure for gender mainstreaming of local policies that is regularly applied in your municipality?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

10. If YES, is it formalized in some LSG documents? Which one?
 - a. No, it is not formalized
 - b. Yes, it is formalized in the document _____
11. Is gender responsive budgeting applied in your LSG?
 - a. Yes, fully
 - b. Yes partly
 - c. Not yet
12. If YES PARTLY, please estimate to which extent is applied GRB currently in your local budgetary processes?
 - a. Less than 25%
 - b. Between 25% and 50%
 - c. Between 51% and 75%
 - d. More than 75% but less than 100%
13. How would you rate the capacities (competences, knowledge and skills) of the employees involved in budgeting processes in your LSG? Some people have higher and some have lower knowledge and skill, but, please try to define average value.

0 (no capacities)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 full capacities
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14. What would be needed to improve capacities of employees for GRB?
15. What other prerequisites except competences are needed to apply GRB in your LSG planning?

Thank you for your cooperation



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