

Outline knowledge product
**DELIVERING ON SDG 5.C.1.
IN WESTERN BALKANS
AND REPUBLIC OF
MOLDOVA**

Budget cycle for year 2021
**PROPORTION OF
COUNTRIES WITH SYSTEMS
TO TRACK AND MAKE
PUBLIC ALLOCATIONS FOR
GENDER EQUALITY
A CSO PERSPECTIVE**



WHY CSO PERSPECTIVE ON DELIVERING SDG5C1

Gender Budget Watchdog Network - GBWN regularly monitors the delivery on SDG5c1. The process of gathering data is participatory but CSO led and based on the Methodological Note by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs reclassified the indicator as Tier II in 2015. The GBWN used the Methodology to independently check the progress on the indicator in each of the seven economies in the region. The monitoring was conducted for the budget cycle for year 2021. It aims to provide a citizen's perspective to openness, transparency, and the level of governments' accountability on the use of public finances for gender equality.

This activity of the GBWN does not intend to compare economies, but to capture status, as it serves as a baseline for the engagement of CSOs in gender budget work under the project financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and co-financed by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

OFFICIAL STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 5C1

The custodian agency responsible for taking the lead in coordinating and guiding the monitoring and reporting process on behalf of other partners and stakeholders is UN Women. The methodological note by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs foresees that the UN Women jointly with UNDP and OECD and led by the Ministries of Finance undertake the process for collection of data. Based on the global survey performed in May 2022, the UN SDG database published new set of indicators. The results of the survey show that Albania and the Republic of Serbia (GBWN region) are among the 19% of countries that successfully institutionalized GRB, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Moldova have applied approaches towards institutionalizations, while Montenegro and Kosovo have not been included in the global data gathering on the SDG5c1 indicator. For summary of results, please see Figure 1.

Indicator 5.c.1, Series: Proportion of countries with system to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (5)		
Country	2018	2021
Albania	1 ^{fn, G}	2 ^{fn, G}
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 ^{fn, G}	1 ^{fn, G}
Montenegro	0 ^{fn, G}	-
N. Macedonia	-	1 ^{fn, G}
Republic of Moldova	1 ^{fn, G}	1 ^{fn, G}
Serbia	-	2 ^{fn, G}

DELIVERING ON SDG 5C1 IN 2021 – a CSO PERSPECTIVE

The data gathered were according to the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDGs Methodological Note on indicator 5.c.1 measuring three criteria: (1) Existence of policies/programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment; (2) Systems to track allocations for gender equality; and (3) Mechanisms to make allocations for gender equality publicly available. Each criterion is assessed by a set of binary questions (yes or no; 1 or 0). The scoring according to the methodology for the indicator is structured as a 'scale' measure by classifying economies into one of three categories: 'fully meets requirements', 'approaches requirements', and 'does not meet requirements.'

The GBWN used the Methodology to independently check the progress on the indicator in each of the seven economies in the region. The monitoring was conducted for the budget cycle for year 2021. For results, see Figure 2.



DELIVERING ON SDG 5.C.1. IN 2021 IN WESTERN BALKANS AND REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
 Proportion of Countries with Systems to Track and Make Public Allocations for Gender Equality – A CSO Perspective

# Criteria	ALB	BIH	KOS	MNE	MK	MD	SRB
1 Existence of policies/programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Existence of systems to track allocations for gender equality	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓
3 Existence of mechanisms to make resource allocations publicly available to increase accountability to women and men	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	✓

Source: Delivering on SDG 5.C.1. in 2022 in Western Balkans and Republic of Moldova available at www.gbwn.net



Source: United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs

REGIONAL TREND

Existence of policies/programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

Regarding the first criterion, almost all WB governments and including Republic of Moldova continued to maintain the well – structured legal provisions that ensure enhancement of the gender equality. All governments planed resources for fostering gender equality despite that the pressure from the pandemic was still prevalent as well as governments facing inner political crisis (Montenegro, Moldova, Kosovo). Moreover, tangible improvements have been noticed in the legal aspect. For instance, we note the Parliamentary debate on new organic Law on Budgets in Macedonia providing for full GRB institutionalization, new Gender Equality Law in Serbia which stipulates precise definitions on GRB, gender statistics alongside the new law on prevention of domestic violence, and newly adopted National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 (accompanied by an adequate action plan). Also, Montenegro adopted new national gender equality strategy, and for the first time the Ministry of Finance introduced instructions on budget preparation stipulating special provisions for the so-called gender budget statements. Further, Moldova adopted the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, as well as developed a new Action Plan of the government setting the provisions and pledges on addressing gender based violence, gender pay gap, and active involvement of men and women.

Although no significant legal changes have been noticed in the reporting period for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in relation to gender equality or budgeting, both countries meet the requirements of the first criteria related to policies/programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. The status quo is visible for almost all monitored governments when it comes to the procedures for execution of budget allocations on gender equality. Such procedures exist in Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, GBWN observes a short coming that the allocated funds cannot be assessed if they are sufficient to enhancing gender equality on national level, as the present procedures of payments and executions are gender insensitive. Improvement in this direction would help authorities to avoid a rough division of the public finances for men and women, a challenge that is also noted in Albania which is working towards making a progress to plan public finance distribution to meet the different needs of women and men respectively.

Existence of systems to track allocations for gender equality

In reference to the second criterion i.e. existing systems to track allocation for gender equality, Macedonia notes a progress. Namely, in 2021, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the international organizations (primarily UN Women), CRPM, and the Macedonian members of the Gender budget watchdog network, jointly entered in a policy

dialogue with the Parliament discussing on the proposed new Law on Budgets and addressing the issue that the budget did not systematically include GRB but only defines the concept. The advocacy efforts resulted in Law amendments being formulated that were submitted for adoption. Additionally, for the first time the State Audit Office conducted performance audit of the gender budget statements for 2020 as well as the existing legislation on gender equality. The ex-ante gender analysis of the budget programs can also be accessed through a reader friendly document in the case of Macedonia which presents all gender budget statements for 2021.

Albania continues to implement solid legal framework in this area assisted with the electronic public finance management system which includes gender indicators on planning, execution, and reporting level.

Serbia accomplishes the requirements of the second criterion, but still faces challenges especially in reference to the initial gender budget assessments, consistency and proficiency in setting gender related objectives in the budget document.

In the case of Montenegro, although positive developments have been monitored, such as the Instructions for the Medium-Term Budget Framework including guidelines for gender responsive budgeting, a gender budget statement, and introducing gender indicators in the finance management information system, still, the country fails to regulate GRB systematically and no independent verification from state audit on the spending and achieved results is performed.

There is inconsistency or lack of ex-ante analysis, independent audit investigations, as well as functional gender related performance indicators in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Moldova. Such status poses a challenge and needs to be tackled.

In all countries' economies ex-post reporting on gender equality spending is missing as well as functional and integrated gender performance indicators in the main financial documents such as the Fiscal strategy and the Annual National Program for Approximation of legislation with the EU. Some of the deficiencies are consequences from the limited collection of gender disaggregated data. For more effective policy and budget planning the institutions must create their own data bases. Considering that in all economies the relevant gender equality framework requires for public sector and in some cases even private sector to generate, keep, and publish gender disaggregated data, nonexistence of informational data base for effective gender mainstreaming is not acceptable.

Existence of mechanisms to make resource allocations publicly available to increase accountability to women and men

The economies assessed on this criterion can be easily categorized as: 1). economies with progress and 2). economies with status quo.

Speaking about the first group, Macedonia has made significant progress compared to 2019. In 2021, Macedonia collected and published all gender budget statements in a reader friendly document on time. Additionally, the allocations for the gender equality are available and accessible having in mind that the Budget 2021 is uploaded in various formats (PDF and XML). However, the country's ministries and agencies that produce gender budget statements should publish their gender budget initiatives on their respective web pages. Albania is continuing to perform well in all three sub-criteria with uploading budget allocations on gender equality in timely, accessible, and reader friendly format (Word and Excel) and presenting it in a Citizens Budget document. However, from this document the allocations relevant for gender in all 50 budget programs that the government claims to have are not visible. Also, Serbia can be placed in this group, but with a swinging performance. Serbia has a good standing in reference to the level of accessibility and the reader friendly format of the uploaded budget documentation (in a report form, accessible to interested citizens, CSOs and media). However, the timeliness of publishing this report is still an issue. This may be a consequence of the timing of the publication not being regulated and included in the Budget Law. Additionally, Serbia's total expenditures on the gender equality actions are only available on local level, but not on a national level. In 2021, for the first time, Montenegro published a budget document (for the 2022 budget year), and under a heading "gender budget", it specifically distinguishes the budget allocations that are gender relevant. In addition, the Budget office of the Parliament of Montenegro published an informational material on gender responsive budgeting including the specific gender relevant allocations for the budget for the year 2022.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, and Kosovo are categorized in the second group as economies with a status quo. Limited to no progress has been noticed in Kosovo - the main concern is that there is a minimum public available information on GRB, which in turn limits the civic participation in terms of budget planning, execution, and reporting. The case with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Moldova is a bit different. Even though both economies do not publish the so-called gender budget statements from various reasons (in case of Bosnia and Herzegovina the national budgets on 2020 and 2021 have not been adopted due to political disturbances, whereas Moldova simply denotes lack of publishing such information), they introduced the model of Citizen's Budget. However, in 2021, there were no references or information on gender equality allocations in the Citizen's Budget documents of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Moldova, making resource allocations for gender equality publicly unavailable.

Progress 2019-2022

As the Gender Budget Watchdog Network assessed the progress against the same criteria in 2019 and provided recommendations for improvement, it can be noted that some economies followed the provided recommendations.

Regarding the first criterion, the economies that show progress as of 2019 are Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Moldova. They have worked on improvement of policy and legal framework for gender equality. Some countries such as Macedonia and Montenegro have even placed an effort to institutionalize the GBR in the budget system, a process that has not yet been finalized during the year of monitoring.

Regarding the second criterion, GBWN detects progress in Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, and Montenegro. The ex-ante analysis is well advanced in these countries, although it is less visible in Serbia. Capacity for ex-post impact analysis needs to be improved and institutionalized everywhere in the region.

Regarding the third criterion, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, and Montenegro show increased transparency and budget information for gender equality are public and easily accessible. Serbia and Albania with publishing a report on GRB showcase accountability of their governments, and they remain as frontrunners in the region in respect of delivering on SDG5c1 indicator.

For outline of evaluation criteria and recommendations, see Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

Criteria / Year (s)	ALB		BIH		KOS		MKD		MDA		MNE		SRB	
	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021
Existence of policies / programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Existence of systems to track allocations for gender equality	√	√	x	x	x	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	√	√
Existence of mechanisms to make resource allocations publicly available to increase accountability to women and men	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	√	√	√

Criterion #	ALB	MKD	MNE
1	Government should allocate appropriate funds for implementing the Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 – 2025., because some essential measures within this strategy do not have budget coverage;	Refereeing to gender equality by national officials when presenting and discussing budgets;	Full implementation of legislative for Gender Equality;
2	Government should prepare an Ex post-gender impact assessment: assessing individual budget measures, after their introduction/ implementation, specifically for their impact on gender equality;	Higher discipline when it comes to publishing GRB statements on budget users' web pages;	Key programs/ politics should be more Gender sensitive;
3	Government should publish, promote, and with the budget assigned for each specific program (pretended to be gender-responsive) for each line ministry and for the municipalities;	More visible presentation of GRB statements in the draft budget and adopted budget;	Concrete steps of assistance from the Gender Institutional Machineries for a significant increase of allocations for gender equality and their visibility;

BIH

Introduction of gender equality/women's empowerment policies/programs on higher governmental level;

Including gender or referring to gender goals in the budget statements and instructions by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury;

Ministry of Finance and Treasury to publish the Citizens' Budget with a gender component included;

KS

Sufficient resources for programs and policies designed for gender equality;

Ex-ante and ex-post gender impact assessments for all key programs and policies;

More information on gender equality allocations;

MDA

Amend legislation on public finances to include the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process/cycle.

Carry out an ex-ante and ex-post gender impact analysis of budget revenues and expenditures/new policies and programs. Revise budget programs with high impact and relevance for gender equality by establishing gender objectives and performance indicators;

Publish annually information on gender equality resource allocations and execution within the budget programs;

SRB

Allocations for the implementation of NAP in the 2023 budget;

Publishing the data about amounts allocated from each ministry for the implementation of National Action Plan.

Budget discussions within the Women's Parliamentary Network should be held, with participation of WCSOs and women's movement;

