



AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

GENDER MAINSTREAMING GUIDANCE



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AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**
GENDER MAINSTREAMING GUIDANCE



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
ALL	Albanian Lekë
ARD	agriculture and rural development
ARDF	Agriculture and Rural Development Fund
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
BLE	Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) of the Federal Government of Germany
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoM	council of ministers
COVID-19	severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGF	European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EC	European Commission
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ESPN	European Social Policy Network
EU RF	EU Results Framework
EU	European Union
EU4GE	EU for Gender Equality
FADN	Farm Accountancy Data Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPI-RF	Foreign Policy Instruments Result Framework
GAP	gender action plan
GDP	gross domestic product
GEL	gender equality law
GENDERNET	OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH

GRB	gender-responsive budgeting
GREAT	Gender Rural Equality and Tourism project
GRPP	gender-responsive public procurement
ha	hectare(s)
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILOSTAT	ILO Department of Statistics
INSTAT	Albanian Institute for Statistics
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPARD	EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LGBTI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, intersexual, and any other individuals whose sexual and/or gender identity differs from the cis-heterosexual
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MSMEs	micro, small, and medium enterprises
NAES	National Agricultural Extension Service
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NUIS	Numri Unik të Identifikimit të Subjektit (unique identification number, equivalent of a VAT number)
NSGE	national strategy for gender equality
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PMEF	performance monitoring and evaluation framework
RAEAs	regional agricultural extension agencies
RIA	regulatory impact assessment

SANECA	Support to Accession Negotiations for Albania in Economic Chapters of Acquis
SARD	sustainable agriculture and rural development
SARDF	Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHERPA	Sustainable Hub to Engage into Rural Policies with Actors
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UAA	utilised agricultural area
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAT	value-added tax
VET	vocational education and training

INTRODUCTION

This gender mainstreaming Guidance is part of a series of resources made available through the European Union's (EU) and UN Women's technical support to the Government of Albania for accelerating the process of EU integration. Its aim is to ensure that future policy, planning, and programming documents more closely align with the EU legal and policy framework on gender equality (the "Gender Equality *acquis*"), and thus enhance equality outcomes for all women, men, girls, and boys in the country. It is targeted to development and integration partners involved in policy, programming, and planning initiatives in the EU accession context. This group primarily includes government staff developing policies and drafting Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) programs, experts providing technical assistance, EU Delegation Task Managers, donors and international development partners supporting EU-aligned reform, and civil society organizations engaged in accountability and consultative processes. The purpose of this Guidance is to provide succinct information on the key gender issues in a particular policy area and to show how gender mainstreaming can be done in practical terms. The Guidance document is envisaged as an initial primer. It can be used as reference document in individuals' daily work, and also serves as training material in efforts to establish gender mainstreaming capacity and skills.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU. The right of women to equal treatment is, above all, a fundamental human right. EU Law recognizes discrimination as politically unacceptable, economically unprofitable, and punishable by law. For this reason, countries are required to comply with the *acquis* on gender equality and non-discrimination when acceding to the EU. As defined by EU Law, gender mainstreaming is the strategy for promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination. Consequently, gender mainstreaming is a prerequisite for aligning national standards with the EU principles and an integral element of ensuing reform processes.

"Women are key actors in agricultural value chains: they contribute to agricultural production, processing, marketing, and distribution; they collect natural resources; they transmit agricultural knowledge; and women's and girls' unpaid work in agriculture brings food to the table of families and communities. By taking charge of most of unpaid care work, women safeguard the social and inter-generational wellbeing of families and communities."

ITCILO (undated), EU Resource Package, Thematic Brief: Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development. Available at: https://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/TA_Agriculture.pdf

Women play a crucial role for the development and economic growth of rural communities. Yet their key role - especially in agricultural production - is often 'invisible' and not recognized. Rural women continue to face greater difficulties, compared to men, in accessing productive resources, securing gainful employment, and participating in decision-making processes. Traditional gender roles and intersecting disadvantages often amplify gender inequalities. The EU is committed to improving the situation, notably through a dedicated objective under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (EU CAP) 2023–2027.¹ Furthermore, the EU Rural Action Plan, which constitutes one of the two EU CAP pillars, foresees supporting the uptake of women's entrepreneurship, strengthening women's participation in decision-making, and the provision of adequate services in rural areas.²

Structured into five sections, this Guidance supports stakeholders to:

- Understand gender inequality issues in agriculture and rural development;
- Learn about relevant EU policy recommendations and directives;
- Identify relevant indicators for mainstreaming gender in agricultural and rural development policies;
- Know about standardized EU methods and tools to mainstream gender equality goals;
- Engage in concrete follow-up, based on a succinct list of key recommended actions.

Gender Equality is not just about women.

Rather, it is about the different realities and needs of women and men across society, and the recognition that these realities and needs should be valued and, importantly, nurtured.

This necessitates ensuring that all people are empowered to take a full and productive role in the family, community, society, and the economy. To be in control of their own lives, to make the choices they wish to make, and thus have fair and equal access to services, support, and opportunity.

Gender-responsive governance is therefore about making sure that in all policies, programs, activities, priorities, and budgets, governments take into account the different needs and concerns of women and men – and address and reduce inequalities between them.

1 European Commission [online]. The Common Agricultural Policy: 2023–2027. See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/new-cap-2023-27_en

2 EU CAP Network [online]. See: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/advancing-gender-equality-rural-areas-eu_en

Agriculture and Rural Development in Albania at a glance

Albania is characterised by a high diversity of ecosystems and habitats rich in biodiversity. Forests cover 41.6 per cent of the total area (28,748 km²), 24 per cent is agriculture land, and 16 per cent permanent grassland and meadows.³ The country is also rich in water resources (coastline, rivers, lakes, groundwater).

In 2018, the total utilised agricultural area (UAA) in Albania was 1,174,081 hectares (ha)⁴, which corresponds to roughly 40 per cent of the total land area of the country.⁵ Being a predominantly hilly and mountainous country (only 24 per cent of the surface is plain), the agricultural area is characterized by an elevated slope and only 44 per cent of the total arable area has a slope of 5 per cent or less.⁶ Half of the UAA is cultivated land (cereals, vegetables, medicinal plants, forage); 41 per cent is permanent grassland and meadows; and 7 per cent is under permanent crops (fruit trees, olives, citrus fruits, vineyards).⁷ The not-utilised area, under municipal administration, is estimated at around 100,000 ha. Land under organic farming is 0.09 per cent. Irrigation is the major source of water in agriculture followed by rain-fed cultivation. Approximately 200,000 ha of irrigated area requires infrastructure rehabilitation. Climate change, soil erosion, and depletion of groundwater pose a significant risk.

In 2022, agriculture represented 17.7 per cent of Albania's GDP.⁸ It remains a pivotal sector of the country's economy and engages 33.9 per cent of its active workforce. Agriculture is the most important source of work for women living in rural areas: women comprise 40.1 per cent of the agricultural labor force, compared to 28.7 per cent of men.⁹

3 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2022). Rural Development Programme 2021-2027 Under Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). See: https://bujqesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Programi-IPARD-III_2021-2027_English.pdf

4 *Ibid.*

5 According to the INSTAT database, agricultural land declined from 696,000 ha in 2017 to 686,400 ha in 2022. However, 2022 figures exclude grassland and meadows, encompassing land used for livestock. See: INSTAT PC-Axis data (2022). Land structure - Land structure, Type and Year (instat.gov.al).

6 European Commission Joint Research Centre (2015). Characteristics of farming systems in Albania. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC95833>

7 European Commission [online]. Agriculture in the enlargement countries – Albania. See: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/international/international-cooperation/enlargement/candidates_en

8 INSTAT [online]. National Accounts (GDP) 2023 data. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/economy-and-finance/national-accounts-gdp/>

9 INSTAT (2023). Men and Women. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12598/burra-dhe-gra-2023.pdf>. While in 2019, men's share was 32.2 per cent, the share of women has remained almost unchanged.

Agriculture primarily consists of small family operations and subsistence farming: 85 per cent of farms are classified as small. The average farm size of 1.04 ha is combined with land fragmentation and unclear property rights.¹⁰ So far, producer organizations have not been successful in Albania, and farmers have little negotiating power. Prices for inputs prices are rarely negotiable and price formation is predominantly the attribute of the local collectors, wholesalers, and processors. Contracts between buyers and farmers are rarely signed formally. Productivity remains relatively low. Degradation of agricultural land and soil erosion are noticed in some parts of the country due to inadequate farming techniques, non-application of crop rotation, low and unbalanced use of organic and mineral fertilizers, and ineffective measures for plant protection. Albania remains a net importer of food.

As of January 2023, the population of Albania was 2,761,785 inhabitants.¹¹ The share of rural population was estimated at 36 per cent in 2022¹², compared to the 2021 EU average of 20.8 per cent.¹³

Availability and quality of rural infrastructure and basic services - stable supply of electricity, safe wastewater and sanitation systems, waste collection, regional and rural road network, digital connectivity - are still under-developed and remain particularly challenging in remote and mountain areas. Overall, the environmental, economic, and social potentials in rural areas are currently insufficiently used to generate diversified income, create employment perspectives, and sustain livelihoods. Due to discriminative social norms, regulations, and practices, in particular women have limited access to productive resources and opportunities to fully engage in agriculture and rural development on an equal footing with men.

10 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2022). Rural Development Programme 2021-2027 Under Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). See: https://bujqesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Programi-IPARD-III_2021-2027_English.pdf;

11 INSTAT (2023). Men and Women. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12598/burra-dhe-gra-2023.pdf>

12 World Bank Open Data. See: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=AL>

13 Eurostat [online]. Urban-rural Europe - Demographic Developments in Rural Regions and Areas. Population Structure. See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Urban-rural_Europe_-_demographic_developments_in_rural_regions_and_areas#Population_structure

BOX 1

What is rural development?

The EU attaches great importance to the preservation of rural areas as economically, ecologically, and socially viable and attractive habitats and environments. Rural development means the sustainable improvement of living conditions in rural areas. It means strengthening villages, landscapes and regions; promoting environmental and nature protection; and supporting sustainable agriculture, forestry, recreation, and tourism. With the overarching objective of the well-being of women, men, girls, and boys residing in rural areas, rural development encompasses the dimensions of **rural society**, **rural economy**, and **rural environment**. A thorough understanding of the intrinsic functions of rural areas is needed to develop objectives and dedicated policy measures under each of these dimensions.

Based on: Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) of the Federal Government of Germany. See: https://www.ble.de/EN/Topics/Rural-Development/rural-development_node.html; and SHERPA: Sustainable Hub to Engage into Rural Policies with Actors – D3.2 Framework Providing Definitions, Operational Typology, and Review of EU Strategies for Rural Areas. See: https://rural-interfaces.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SHERPA_D3-2_Framework-rural-definition.pdf

BOX 2

EU Definition of cities, urban and rural areas

In its 51st session (3-6 March 2020), the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the methodology for delineation of cities and urban and rural areas for international and regional statistical comparison purposes. Led by the EU, the method was proposed by a consortium of international organisations, i.e., EU, OECD, World Bank, FAO, UN-Habitat, ILO. The Degree of Urbanisation classifies the entire territory of a country along the urban-rural continuum. It combines population size and population density thresholds to capture the full settlement hierarchy. 1 km² grid cells are classified based on population density, contiguity, and population size. The main settlement typologies are:

Urban centre (or high density cluster): Consists of contiguous grid cells with a density of at least 1,500 inhabitants per km². An urban centre has a population of at least 50,000.

Urban cluster (or moderate density clusters) – towns and suburbs: Consists of contiguous grid cells with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km² and has a population of at least 5,000 in the cluster. (The urban centres are subsets of the corresponding urban clusters).

Rural grid cells (mostly low density cells): Grid cells that do not belong to an urban cluster and with a density below 300 inhabitants per km². Some rural cells may have a higher density, but they are not part of cluster with a large enough population size to be classified as an urban cluster.

Based on: European Commission [online]. Global Human Settlement Layer. Harmonised Global Definitions of Cities and Settlements - The Degree of Urbanisation, a new global definition of cities, urban and rural areas. See: <https://ghsl.jrc.ec.europa.eu/degurbaDefinitions.php>

According to current legislation (Law No.139/2015 On Local Self-Governance), Albania has 74 cities (urban areas), and 2,972 villages (rural areas). However, no clear definition for rural areas is in place, posing a challenge to identifying rural and urban populations as well as comparisons at regional, EU, and international levels. As part of EU integration, further alignment with EU classification is needed. An updated system would allow the identification and quantification of urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, and support fact- and evidence-based structural development efforts across Albania's territory.

Sources: INSTAT (2021). Regional Statistical Yearbook. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/10362/rajonali-2021-eng.pdf>

1 AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT - KEY GENDER ISSUES IN ALBANIA

Women's work in agriculture substantially contributes to the economy, yet their role remains largely unrecognized

In 2022, agriculture represented 17.7 per cent of Albania's GDP.¹⁴ It remains a pivotal sector of the country's economy and engages 33.9 per cent of its active workforce.¹⁵ Women comprise 40.1 per cent of the agricultural labor force, compared to 28.7 per cent for men. Agriculture is the most important source of work for women living in rural areas.

Similar to other sectors, the agricultural industry is characterized by gender segmentation of the labor market. Women employed in agriculture are more likely to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal jobs, whereas men tend to occupy more rewarding and higher skilled positions.¹⁶ Overall, women are overrepresented in informal employment, in unpaid work, and as contributors in family work. Analysis of the structure of employment and activity status of employees reveals that 23.5 per cent of women are family workers while the share of male family workers is significantly lower at 13.2 per cent. The sector is additionally characterized by a considerable amount of women's unpaid work.¹⁷ In informal employment, the share of women contributing as family workers is twice as high as men's (54 per cent versus 28 per cent).¹⁸ High levels of informal work among women, particularly those contributing as family workers, results in their exclusion from maternity leave and limits access to social protection and insurance schemes. Moreover, informal work increases the risk that older women fall into poverty due to lower contributions to pension schemes over their lifetime. Although women bear a significant share and burden of agricultural labor, their contribution remains largely unappreciated in economic terms.¹⁹

14 INSTAT [online]. National Accounts (GDP) 2023 data. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/economy-and-finance/national-accounts-gdp/>

15 INSTAT [online]. Employment and unemployment, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q3-2023. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/labour-market-and-education/employment-and-unemployment-from-lfs/>

16 FAO (2011). The Role of Women in Agriculture. See: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/a605b688-83e0-4e3a-ad47-874f0d6f63b1>

17 INSTAT (2023). Labour Market, 2022. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/books/2023/labour-market-2022/>

18 ILO estimation for the year 2019 (ILOSTAT). See: ILO (2023). Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Update. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/women-and-men-informal-economy-statistical-update>

19 FAO (2016). Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Albania. See: <https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.52-%20Gender%2C%20agriculture%20and%20rural%20development%20in%20Albania.pdf>

Gender stereotyping persists in relation to women's unpaid care-providing responsibilities. In addition to farming, agricultural work, and running small businesses, women take responsibility for much unpaid care and domestic work, such as household chores, child rearing, attending to family needs, and caring for the sick and elderly. Women's burdens in rural areas are further increased by poor infrastructure, weak service delivery, and lack of public transport. Rural women also shoulder the responsibility for all household chores and farm duties when male household members pursue non-agricultural employment or migrate in search of jobs. Overwork and exhaustion negatively impact women's health.²⁰

Gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices limit women's access to essential resources for basic agricultural production

At the root of discriminatory practices is the entrenched preconception that women are supplementary workers to men, who are considered the main breadwinners in Albanian households. Thus, while male household heads often own and manage household assets and agricultural inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizer, agricultural machines), women in those households are often not free to use the resources or jointly decide on crop varieties, types of fertilizers and chemicals used, or the timing of their application. In such cases, women cannot use their knowledge and experience for productive activities.

Men also tend to be associated with professional knowledge and skills while women face challenges in access to training and extension services to learn skills for using machines, applying chemicals, and vaccinating animals. The re-traditionalized preconception that primarily men use agricultural technology, modern equipment, and machines has resulted in women performing manual drudgery for long hours. Women's participation in trainings also tends to be limited since sessions are often scheduled and conducted at times when they are engaged in other responsibilities.

Gender inequalities in agriculture are also often perpetuated by discriminatory administrative frameworks. These include practices that (i) prevent women from (co-)owning land; (ii) inhibit women earn personal income or access support schemes (e.g., through being refused the use

²⁰ FAO and UN Women (forthcoming). National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Albania.

of a tax number)²¹; (iii) training programs and extension services that ask for “farmer certification” as a criterion for participation; and (iv) water user associations that use land ownership as a criterion for membership.

Unavailability of public transport in rural areas and restrictions on mobility are further inhibiting factors. In Albania, men own and drive the vast majority of motor bikes and cars, and the prevailing social norm is that it is not suitable for women to travel alone. Limited mobility makes it difficult for women to access markets.²²

Agricultural extension services predominantly cater to men

Under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Agricultural Extension Service (NAES) operates through four regional agricultural extension agencies (RAEAs) and, at local level, agricultural information centers. The public advisory service also includes five specialized agricultural technology transfer centers. The structure is responsible for providing farmers with information, advice, and training on vegetables, fruit production, livestock, plant protection, and agricultural economics, among others. A recent FAO and UN Women study found that NAES programs, plans, and field activities lack gender-responsiveness, such as consideration of gender roles in farming and women’s restricted access to essential productive resources, including time-saving technologies.²³ Furthermore, gender capacity and skills are not yet among the required qualifications of staff, and respective trainings are lacking. Weak gender-responsiveness of the service, in conjunction with women’s social status and low levels of land titling, has resulted in women’s limited access to support.²⁴ Agricultural extension services have primarily targeted and supported men: among the 70,000 farmers contacted and assisted by extension services in various regions in 2016, just

21 Guideline No.19, 'Implementation of a special regime of compensation scheme for agriculture producers for the purpose of value added tax', dated 03/09/2014, requires farmers who sell their products to register at the tax offices and hold a unique taxpayer identification number. The registration is obligatory for farmers to benefit from national support schemes. The vast majority of tax number holders is men, even though, in principle, co-registration of (women) spouses is permitted/possible. See: <https://www.tatime.gov.al/c/3/12/23/fermere>

22 FAO and UN Women (forthcoming). National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Albania.

23 FAO and UN Women (forthcoming). Towards Gender-Responsive Agricultural Extension Services in Albania. Assessment Report.

24 FAO (2024). Ensuring that rural advisory services are responsive to women: good practices from FAO experiences in Europe and Central Asia. See: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/c69ef2a6-4381-4e16-b624-a090e94b5710>

around 11 per cent were found to be women.²⁵ Since then, the share of women beneficiaries of extension services has further shrunken and reached just 8 per cent in 2023.²⁶ As a result of limited access to agricultural and market information, women’s productivity levels remain low.

The current level of farm (co-)registration limits women’s access to economic opportunities

The legislation guaranteeing women’s equal property and inheritance rights has improved considerably.²⁷ Yet, data on women’s (co-)ownership of land is unavailable. Currently, 10 percent of land titles are digitally registered, 10 per cent are not registered at all, while 80 per cent are registered in paper format only. The issue is further complicated by provisions on joint tenancy of agricultural land and the concept of the “agricultural family”, as a special type of co-ownership. Under this regime, joint property is registered in the public immovable properties registers exclusively in the name of the head of household (as per the civil registry of 1991), considered the head of the “agricultural family”.²⁸ The lack of land titles and registration documents makes it challenging for women (and men) farmers to access financing, worsening underinvestment and increasing the risks associated with inadequate working capital. Furthermore, registration documents alone do not confer proof of ownership due to inconsistencies between registration and cadastral data. This can result in conflicting ownership claims, further heightening uncertainty.²⁹

25 UNDP & UN Women (2016). Albania Gender Brief. See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/10/albania-gender-brief>

26 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2024 data, cited in: FAO and UN Women (forthcoming). National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Albania.

27 Law No.111/2018 on Cadaster, adopted 02/02/2019. Available at: <https://www.ashk.gov.al/2021/04/16/2066/>. (English version at: <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC220473/>); and Law No.110/2018 on Notary, adopted 20/12/2018. Available at: <http://www.nchb.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Ligj-nr.-110-2018-Per-Noterine.pdf>. (Unofficial English translation at: <https://euralius.eu/index.php/en/library/albanian-legislation?task=download.send&id=160&catid=25&m=0>). The new legislation aims to protect women from alienation, acquirement and relinquishment of their immovable property including land. It foresees the application of a one-stop-shop system for land transactions in public notary and the introduction of a comprehensive system to ensure the accountability of notaries.

28 A detailed discussion of the legal background and the challenges arising from implementation is provided in: Center for Legal Civic Initiatives (2023). Study Report: Improving Albanian Legislation on Gender Equality, Analysis of Civil Code Provisions Concerning Co-ownership in the Agricultural Family. Summary available at: https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/01_legislation_women_2.pdf

29 World Bank (2024). Unlocking Albania’s Agricultural Potential - From Fields to Finance. See: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/agfood/unlocking-albanias-agricultural-potential-fields-finance>

Many women are still not registered as (co-)owners of their houses, land, and other property, which largely remain registered under the name of men spouses or other male relatives. Among women who do own property, the majority (approximately 76 per cent) have their names on the property title or deed for a house, not land.³⁰ Factors such as patriarchal norms related to marriage, inheritance practices, and lack of awareness about women's land rights directly impact women's land ownership, especially in rural areas. Women must pursue ownership rights through complex legal routes that are often hampered by internal procedures for property registrations and transactions that continued to fall short of the standards set by clarity and anti-bribery measures.³¹ For decades, the exclusive registration of agricultural land in men's names has restricted women's access to services and contracts. In turn, this has barred women farmers from accessing benefits like agricultural extension services, financial support, and formal contracts with traders, negatively impacting on women's productivity.³² Women also encounter challenges in accessing formal credit from commercial banks, primarily due to inadequate collateral, which is exacerbated by weak or non-existent *de facto* property rights. Achieving greater equality concerning land rights and access to credit would significantly enhance women's profitable participation in the agricultural economy. Lack of land ownership also affects women's membership in farmer organizations, such as irrigation and water user associations and producer associations. Since these organizations often require land ownership or household headship to qualify as a member, it is difficult for women to join. When extension services only target registered farmers or association members, women are automatically excluded due to their ineligible status and, therefore, do not benefit from such services.

Women have limited (co-)ownership of farms and agricultural enterprises

In 2022, of the 84,369 farmers officially registered with tax offices in Albania, 10.8 per cent were women.³³ The bulk of women's contribution to the

30 INSTAT (2018). Albania Demographic and Health Survey II (2017-2018). See: <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR348/FR348.pdf>

31 European Commission (2023). Albania Report 2023. See: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_690%20Albania%20report.pdf

32 UN Women (2016). National Study: Economic Diversification for Women Living in Albanian Rural Areas. Available at: <https://albania.un.org/en/46581-economic-diversification-women-living-albanian-rural-areas>

33 INSTAT (2022). Business Registers, 2022. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/books/2023/business-registers-2022/>

agricultural sector is through informal employment in family farming.³⁴ In this type of farming, men tend to be identified as farm managers and “heads of household” while women are registered as “helpers” under the category of “contributing family workers”.³⁵ Men typically control agricultural assets, decision-making, finance, and tasks involving mobility, while women predominantly handle manual agricultural work such as pre- and post-harvest activities, food processing, and household chores. This unequal division of labor restricts women’s access to agricultural assets.

Enterprises that operate under the economic activity of “Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing” represent just 1 per cent of total active enterprises.³⁶ More than 80 per cent of active agricultural enterprises are owned and/or managed by men: in 2022, women (co-)owned just 18,5 per cent of the active enterprises in agriculture, forestry, and fishing.³⁷ Since 2016, the overall share of women business owners and managers in Albania has increased. Yet, the scope and pace of women’s economic inclusion through private sector development remains slow, especially for women in rural areas. The impact of restrictive gender norms that result in women’s direct and indirect discrimination is apparent at all levels of the rural economy.

Women in rural areas have limited access to the resources required to engage in business

Many women in Albania face issues of access to business resources. Those who do not have a bank account, or land for collateral, face limited access to financial services, which makes it difficult to start, manage, and expand their businesses.

Bank accounts are generally required in order to receive financial services. However, there is a clear rural-urban divide: in 2017, just 31 per cent of the population living in rural areas reported having a bank account, compared to 52 per cent among the urban population.³⁸ In addition, a significant gender

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ FAO (2016). Gender, Agriculture, and Rural Development in Albania. See: <https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.52-%20Gender%2C%20agriculture%20and%20rural%20development%20in%20Albania.pdf>

³⁶ INSTAT (2022). Business Registers, 2022. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/books/2023/business-registers-2022/>

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ INSTAT, Institute of Public Health, and ICF (2018). Albania Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18. Available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/5050/adhs-2017-18-pdf.pdf>

gap is apparent: among the age group 15-45 years, only 17 per cent of women and 25.9 per cent of men living in rural areas reported having a bank account, compared to 44.7 per cent women and 48.2 per cent men among urban residents.³⁹ These findings illustrate the intersecting disadvantage that arises from characteristics of gender (i.e., being a woman) and residence (i.e., living in a rural area).

Furthermore, rural women are faced with limited access to training on business-related knowledge and skills, such as those used for processing and marketing. In order to effectively market a business, it is important to get timely and accurate information through a mobile phone, radio, or information and communications technology (ICT). Whether a woman has such sources can influence the success of her business.

Although the use of ICT for marketing is progressing overall, rural women have limited access to the internet and ICT. Overall, ICT infrastructure is well developed in urban centers. However, in rural areas, where electricity coverage and broadband infrastructure are less well developed, costs can be high and penetration low – and fewer individuals have access to and use of the internet. Among households in rural areas, less than 10 per cent have access to Internet, while only 28 per cent have a computer.⁴⁰ The lack of rural connectivity in Albania has been identified as one of the gaps hampering growth in the country.⁴¹ In addition, when a family has only one mobile phone, the male household head often uses it while female family members cannot do so freely. Studies on rural women's internet access and ICT use are currently lacking.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ ITU (2022). Albania – Digital Development Country Profile. See: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Publications/2022/Digital%20Development/Digital%20Development%20Country%20Profile_Albania_final_02.22.pdf

BOX 3

Gender gap in rural areas of the Western Balkans: The digital divide

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) grow two to three times faster and create new jobs when they embrace novel digital technologies which can be used by existing or “traditional” businesses. Yet nearly half of all households in the Western Balkans region lack reliable computer and broadband internet access. Additionally, about a third lack fixed broadband internet connections, which offer higher, more reliable speeds than other types of broadband.

On average, two thirds of individuals in Western Balkan economies lack the basic digital skills required to navigate digital spaces. Only about a fifth of those in the six Western Balkan economies use the internet to connect with public authorities or use digital government platforms.

Despite the rapid proliferation of digital tools and services, women continue to face systemic and structural barriers in accessing and adopting new technologies. They are less likely than men to use mobile internet applications, and recent statistics show this contrast to be even starker in rural areas. As a consequence of constraints such as affordability, illiteracy, user capabilities, and discriminatory social norms, women in rural areas are particularly disadvantaged in terms of access to ICTs and are less likely to engage with ICT solutions. Rural women’s and girls’ digital capabilities and access to technology need to be enhanced to make them equal contributors to and beneficiaries of agrifood systems and rural development.

Sources: OECD (2020). The COVID-19 Crisis in the Western Balkans: Economic Impact, Policy Responses, and Short-term Sustainable Solutions. See: <https://www.oecd.org/south-east-europe/COVID-19-Crisis-Response-Western-Balkans.pdf>

UN Women (2023). Innovation and Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age for Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls: Expert Guidance and Substantive Inputs to Preparations for the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. See: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/230213%20BLS22613%20UNW%20CSW67.v04%20%282%29.pdf>

Women farmers are weakly represented in rural organizations, associations, and decision-making bodies

Despite rural Albanian women's important roles in agricultural production, their participation in decision-making at the household, community, and administrative levels tends to be limited. Women are rarely members of, or represented in, formal associations or committees, and they remain significantly underrepresented in decision-making and leadership positions.⁴² At the community level, men are the leaders of producer groups and cooperatives while women are directly or indirectly excluded from decision-making. Farmer organizations usually have small numbers of female members since predominantly male household heads join these associations. Thus, women are rarely present in discussions, and their knowledge, perspectives, needs, and entitlements are not reflected in group decisions. There is also concern about the lack of participation of women in processes related to natural resource management, such as integrated water management, and the weak inclusion of rural women in climate change, biodiversity, and cultural heritage preservation initiatives.⁴³

Men occupy most of the important positions within local (government) organizations (e.g., rural farmer associations, local-level rural development councils, water user associations, etc.) due to perceptions that men should take responsibility for technical and professional issues while women lack the capacity to perform these duties due to lack of formal professional education. Furthermore, women also lack economic power, political clout, and information on decision-making processes. Finally, due to limitations to women's mobility, physical distance from administrative centers - where decisions are made - further limits women's opportunities to participate. As a result, little attention has been paid to the situation, issues, and needs of women farmers.

Rural service provision and infrastructure do not meet women's and girls' needs

In Albania, limited access to basic services such as health care, sexual and reproductive healthcare, and social protection in rural and remote areas - especially for women and girls - remain a concern.⁴⁴ In addition, poor water

42 UN Women (2020). Albania Country Gender Equality Brief 2020. See: <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/country-gender-equality-brief-albania-2020-0>

43 *Ibid.*

44 UN CEDAW (2023). Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Albania, 2023. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en

and sanitation infrastructure, lack of time-saving technologies, insufficient early childcare provision, unsafe transportation infrastructure, and lack of affordable public transport all have direct negative impacts on women's ability to dedicate time to productive and paid work, and to access markets.

Agricultural vocational education does not support career perspectives for women and girls

As Albania aspires to join the EU common market, new levels of professional training are required so young women and men can engage as farm-level workers, technicians, agricultural business entrepreneurs, and rural development decision-makers. Vocational schools play an important role in building qualified human capacity and equipping young women and men with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the market needs. However, despite promotional activities and support to encourage students from rural areas of Albania to participate in vocational education and training (VET), attendance in vocational schools has dropped. The decrease in enrolment was particularly pronounced among vulnerable groups (minus 30 per cent).⁴⁵

There are eight agricultural vocational schools in Albania, and they remain heavily male dominated. Girls' participation is low (roughly 16 per cent), with negligible participation of those from rural areas. In general, neither girls nor their parents consider agricultural vocational education a viable option, and girls often feel unsafe in school environments, including in dormitories. Consequently, education and future job perspectives for girls from rural communities remain limited. At the same time, the lack of female agricultural experts and extensionists has a negative impact on outreach to farming women, farm productivity, and livelihoods especially among young women farmers. Furthermore, as young people continue to migrate to urban areas or emigrate abroad in search of jobs and a better life, rural areas and enterprises become increasingly abandoned.

Agricultural vocational schools need to become empowered to attract more girls and boys from rural areas and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes rural communities and the rural workplace require. The resulting diverse pool of female and male professionals - equipped with the skills and qualifications necessary for the industries' development - could then effectively

⁴⁵ European Commission (2023). Albania Report 2023. See: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ea0a4b05-683f-4b9c-b7ff-4615a5fffd0b_en?filename=SWD_2023_690%20Albania%20report.pdf

contribute to rural development, diversification, income, and growth. Especially women and girls in and from rural areas would be presented with viable livelihood options that allow them to remain close to their rural communities and at the same time pursue a professional life.

National policies, programs, budgets, and support schemes in agriculture respond insufficiently to women's needs

Overall, policies, plans, programs, and budgets in Albania tend to be developed on the assumption that all individuals engaging in farming are men. As evidenced by the 2021-2027 Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries⁴⁶, strategic documents cater to the male farmer. Officials and extension workers disseminating agricultural technologies, policies, information, and innovations to farmers also tend to be men. While the overall number of women benefiting from National Support Schemes increased during the period 2018–2023, women's share among total beneficiaries dropped from 22 per cent in 2018 to 16 per cent in 2023.⁴⁷ To encourage women's participation, the Agriculture and Rural Development Fund (ARDF) awards additional scoring points (“bonus”) to women applicants. However, the reported share of women applicants and women beneficiaries of ARDF programs remains extremely low.⁴⁸ National agricultural support schemes and agricultural training schemes lack dedicated gender-responsive measures, including more inclusive extension outreach. The collection of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, including the monitoring of gender-sensitive performance indicators, require strengthening.⁴⁹

46 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2022). Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries 2021–2027, approved by Decision No.460, dated 29 June 2022. Available at: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2022/100/6dea9d2c-c264-48a8-a9e1-d041781a823c;q=strategjia%20e%20bujqesise%20dhe%20zhvillimit%20rural>

47 Agriculture and Rural Development Agency, 2024 data, cited in: FAO and UN Women (forthcoming). National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Albania.

48 In 2018, 779 women applied for the national agricultural support schemes, out of whom 627 became beneficiaries. Five women each benefited from “Support for investments in agritourism”, “Incubator support to produce local traditional products”, and “Support to build or reconstruct rural tourism premises with at least six to ten rooms”. In 2019, the share of women applicants for ARDF subsidies was 19 per cent. Source: Agriculture and Rural Development Agency, 2019 data; and: Ombudsperson of the Republic of Albania (2020). Alternative report on the implementation of the CEDAW convention in Albania 2016 – 2020. Available at: <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/alternative-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-cedaw-convention-in-albania>

49 State Supreme Audit Institution (2023). Women's Economic Empowerment in Albania. Performance Audit Report. See: https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/KLSH%20Audit%20English%202023_web.pdf

BOX 4

Gender-sensitive ARD performance monitoring indicators

- Number of women and men working in the rural economy
- Number of women and men farmers
- Number of women and men benefiting from agriculture-related support schemes versus those who apply, for each support scheme
- Number of agricultural support program beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex (e.g., olive sector program, 'Support for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas in Albania - SDRA (GRAND)' program, and similar)
- Share of support scheme funds benefitting women farmers versus the total national/total IPARD support scheme amounts
- Average support scheme amounts received by women/men beneficiaries
- Number of women and men participating in activities promoting agricultural, livestock, and agro-processing products
- Number of women and men benefitting from agribusiness loans
- Total value of agribusiness loans taken by women/men
- Average size of women's/men's agribusiness loans

Based on: State Supreme Audit Institution (2023). Women's Economic Empowerment in Albania. Performance Audit Report. See: https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/KLSH%20Audit%20English%202023_web.pdf

A dedicated gender assessment of the responsiveness, adequacy, and effectiveness of support measures currently in place is pending. As highlighted by the UN CEDAW Committee, there is lack of understanding of the nature, scope, and necessity of temporary special measures aimed at addressing intersecting forms of discrimination against rural women and accelerating substantive equality.⁵⁰ Application of temporary special measures (affirmative action) is also a key tool under EU Gender Law, applied across Member States in all areas where women are under-represented or disadvantaged.⁵¹

50 UN CEDAW (2023). Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Albania, 2023. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en

51 European Commission (2023). Albania Report 2023. See: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_690%20Albania%20report.pdf

The Rural Development Programme 2021-2027 under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance of the Republic of Albania (IPARD III) makes explicit reference to gender equality obligations and goals.⁵² It refers to the respective international framework Aide-Mémoire⁵³ on gender mainstreaming in the UN Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan, the obligations under the EU Gender Action Plan III⁵⁴, and activities and results foreseen under the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021-2030), Objective 3.1 “Economic empowerment of women in rural areas”.⁵⁵ The overall aim of IPARD III is to increase employment and income “generated by women and young entrepreneurs in rural areas”. The document defines the regulations for accessing IPARD III funds, which include:

- Explicit adherence to standard EU gender equality requirements, i.e., gender mainstreaming across programmes;
- Gender analysis;
- Sex-disaggregation of data;
- Use and monitoring of gender indicators;
- Gender mainstreaming training for Operating Structures;
- Cooperation with women's organizations/associations;
- Women's equal participation in official groups and bodies (such as Local Action Groups);
- Women's representation in leadership and decision-making positions;
- The involvement of government bodies responsible for promoting gender equality;
- Affirmative action (quota, preference to women applicants);
- Reporting on gender equality outcomes.

52 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2022). See: https://bujqesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Programi-IPARD-III_2021-2027_English.pdf

53 UN Women - Women's Resilience to Disasters Knowledge Hub (2017). Aide-Memoire on integrating gender equality in the UN plan of action on disaster risk reduction for resilience. Available at: <https://wrđ.unwomen.org/practice/resources/aide-memoire-integrating-gender-equality-un-plan-action-disaster-risk-reduction>

54 European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2020). Objectives and Indicators to Frame the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025), p.27. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0284>

55 National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030, published in the Official Gazette No.112, dated 15/07/2021. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2021/112>. The English version is available at: https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/WEB_Strategjia%20Kombetare%20-%20EN.pdf

Information on the level of adherence to and compliance with the set of gender equality regulations during IPARD III implementation is unavailable. In 2023, IPARD III was suspended by the European Commission and remains inactive.

The EU regulations defined under IPARD III for addressing and promoting gender equality in agriculture serve as valuable guidance for aligning with EU standards. National policy responses and regulations are needed that result in closing the gender gap and fostering an environment in which women can equitably access resources so they can effectively contribute to agricultural production, competitiveness, growth, and rural development.

Gaps in gender statistics and data on agriculture and rural development

Sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics are essential for understanding the situation women and men face in Albania's ARD sector. They are also key to conducting gender analysis, developing gender-responsive policies, and designing measures that address inequalities and gender-specific challenges. However, current data gaps hinder the design and implementation of policies, programmes and budgets related to agriculture and rural development that adequately address inequalities, tackle gender-specific challenges, and monitor progress in closing gender gaps.⁵⁶ Significant efforts are required to establish and monitor gender indicators related to agriculture and rural development in Albania, including standard EU gender indicators as well as Compliance Indicators for CEDAW Articles 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16.⁵⁷ Progress is also required in setting up of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)⁵⁸, in line with the recommendations brought forward in the latest EC Albania Report.⁵⁹ FADN collects data on farms and farm economy, including all farm members, to assess income and business activities, as well as to monitor how farming and farms are affected by farm policy. Similarly, the upcoming Agricultural Census provides a clear opportunity for aligning more closely with EU standards, as well as introducing variables that enable the closing of gender data gaps.⁶⁰

56 UN CEDAW (2023). Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Albania, 2023. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en

57 FAO (2013). CEDAW. A tool for gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policy and programme formulation – Guidelines for Ministries of Agriculture and FAO. See: <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/427019/>

58 European Commission [online]. Farm Accountancy Data Network. See: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/data-and-analysis/farm-structures-and-economics/fadn_en

59 European Commission (2023). Albania Report 2023. See: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_690%20Albania%20report.pdf

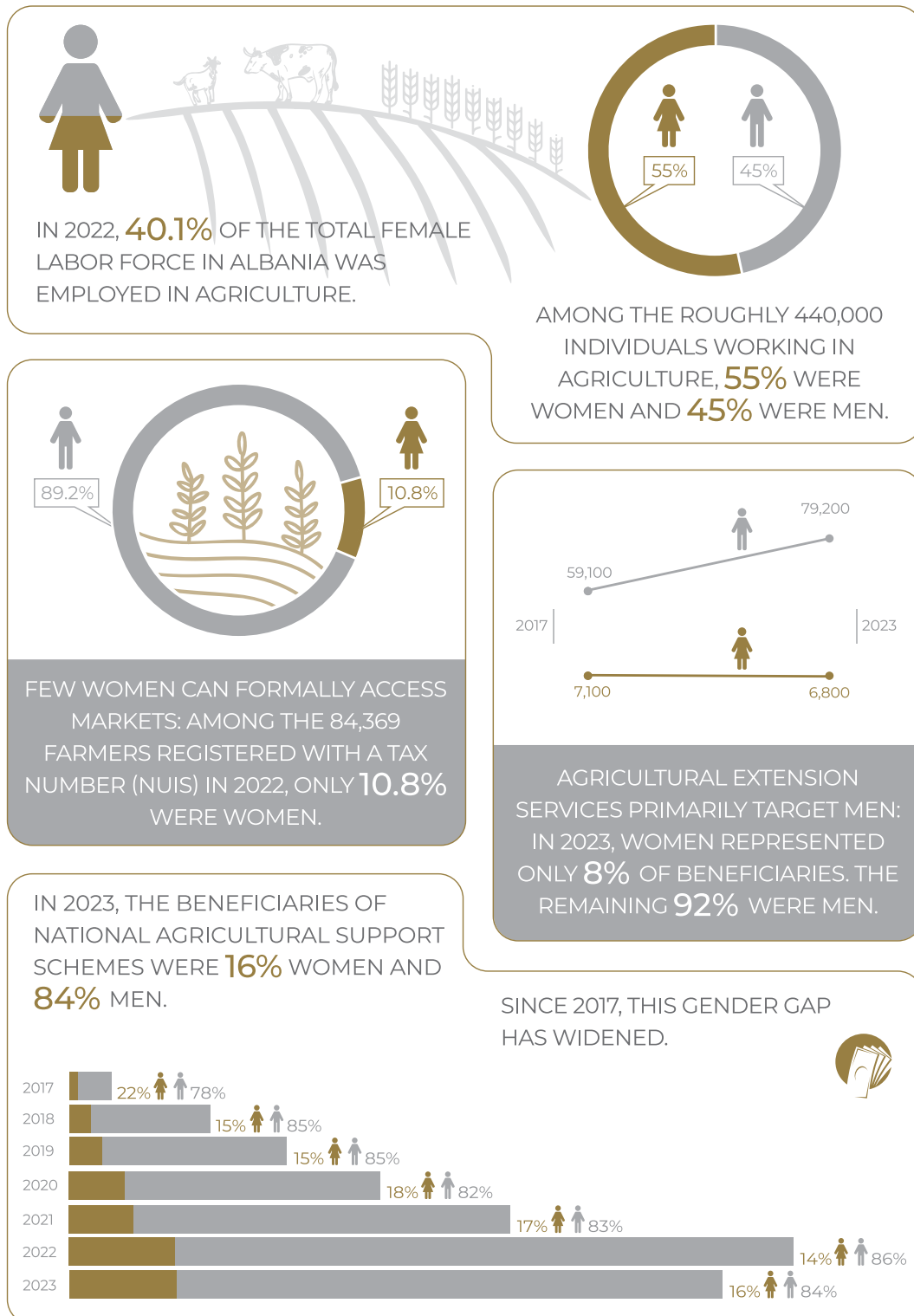
60 Eurostat [online]. Agricultural Census – Data and Variables Collected. See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/information-data/agricultural-census>

BOX 5

Summary of main gender inequality issues in agriculture

- Women's work in agriculture substantially contributes to the economy, yet their role remains largely unrecognized.
- Gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices limit women's access to essential resources for basic agricultural production.
- Agricultural extension services predominantly cater to men.
- Lack of property (co-)registration limits women's access to economic opportunities.
- Women have limited (co-)ownership of agricultural enterprises and farms.
- Women in rural areas have limited access to the resources required to engage in business.
- Women farmers are weakly represented in rural organizations, associations, and decision-making bodies.
- Rural service provision and infrastructure do not meet women's and girls' needs.
- Agricultural vocational education does not support career perspectives for women and girls.
- National policies, programs, budgets, and support schemes in agriculture respond insufficiently to women's needs.
- Gaps in gender statistics and data on agriculture and rural development.

FIGURE 1: Women, men, and agriculture in Albania



Sources: INSTAT (2023). Labour Market, 2022; Agriculture and Rural Development Agency, 2024 data, cited in: FAO and UN Women (forthcoming). National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Albania.

2 GENDER EQUALITY, AGRICULTURE, AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF EU ACCESSION

Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 lays down common provisions on the implementation of Union Funds. Specifically, it is stated that the Union should, at all stages of implementation, aim at eliminating inequalities, promoting equality between men and women, integrating the gender perspective, as well as combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Article 7). The Regulation also references Member State partnerships with relevant public authorities, economic and social partners as well as bodies representing civil society in order to promote, among others, gender equality goals (Article 5). Finally, it calls for a system to record and store data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification, and audit, and to ensure that this data is broken down by gender where required (Article 125).⁶¹

The European Green Deal (2019)⁶² is the EU's sustainable and inclusive growth strategy. It makes reference to socially inclusive transitions.

The Farm to Fork Strategy (2020)⁶³ is intended as part of the European Green Deal, and as a strategy to make food systems fairer, healthier, and more environmentally friendly. It makes one reference to gender equality goals.

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023–2027 supports farmers, ensures Europe's food security, and keeps the rural economy alive by promoting jobs in farming, agrifood industries, and associated sectors.⁶⁴ The document includes – for the first time – specific reference to the need to support women in farming, particularly under Specific Objective 8, which aims at promoting employment, growth, gender equality, women's representation in decision-making and participation in farming

61 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320–469. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1303>

62 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS The European Green Deal, COM/2019/640 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52019DC0640>

63 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, COM/2020/381 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0381>

64 European Commission [online]. The Common Agricultural Policy: 2023–2027. See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/new-cap-2023-27_en

businesses, social inclusion, and local development in rural areas, including the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry. In the process of drafting their individual CAP Strategic Plans, EU Member States are required to (i) assess the situation of women in farming and in rural areas; and (ii) address the related challenges in their strategic plans. Furthermore, gender equality should be an integral part of the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of CAP interventions.

The CAP Regulation for drawing up strategic plans, i.e., **Regulation (EU) 2021/2115**, calls specifically for focus on promoting the participation of women in the socio-economic development of rural areas, with special attention to farming, supporting women's key role.⁶⁵ Furthermore, it highlights the Regulation's importance as a tool, contains several gender-sensitive impact indicators, and urges Member States to strengthen their capacity in gender mainstreaming and engage in the collection of sex-disaggregated data. The participation of women in farming is specifically stated as an objective (Article 6). National managing authorities of Member States should bring the CAP strategic plans to the attention of relevant bodies, including those involved in promoting equality between men and women (Article 123).

European Union Member States have also sought to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing Europe's rural areas by developing an **EU Rural Development policy**. It aims to "contribute to the development of a Union agricultural sector that is more territorially and environmentally balanced, climate-friendly and resilient, and competitive and innovative".⁶⁶ The document complements the system of direct payments to farmers and measures to manage agricultural markets, and sets six main priorities. The EU is committed to improving women's prospects and livelihoods in rural areas, notably through the **EU Rural Action Plan (2022)**, by supporting the uptake of female entrepreneurship, women's participation in decision-making, investment in work-life balance services, dedicated networking activities, and research and innovation actions.⁶⁷ In 2022, the **Rural Observatory** was launched to support knowledge production and data collection related to EU rural areas, covering economic, social, and environmental dimensions.⁶⁸

65 Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115>

66 European Commission [online]. Common Agricultural Policy – Rural Development. See: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en

67 European Union Rural Vision [online]. Actions for Resilient Rural Areas. See: https://rural-vision.europa.eu/action-plan/resilient_en

68 European Union [online]. Rural Observatory. See: <https://observatory.rural-vision.europa.eu/?lng=en&ctx=RUROBS>

BOX 6

Dedicated support for small farm-holders in the EU

Small farms remain a cornerstone of Union agriculture as they play a vital role in supporting rural employment and contribute to territorial development. In order to promote a more balanced distribution of support and to reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries of small amounts, Member States should have the option to design a specific intervention for small farmers replacing the other direct payments interventions. In order to ensure better targeting of that support, a differentiation of the payment should be possible. To enable small farmers to choose the system that best suits their needs, participation of farmers in the intervention should be optional.

Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R2115&qid=1703061535932#:~:text=Small%20farms%20remain,should%20be%20optional>

Across the EU, data on farms are collected and monitored through the **Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)**.⁶⁹ FADN provides validated annual data regarding the factors of production, level of farming income, and technical, economic, and social conditions on the holdings involved. The goal is to provide a detailed and accurate picture of the conditions and of reality, which can then meaningfully feed into fact- and evidence-based agricultural policy. Despite the large proportion of women's labor in agricultural production, women remain largely invisible and unaccounted for as actors in agriculture, and consequentially are systemically excluded from support measures and services. FADN is an important tool for closing gender data gaps in agriculture by capturing the whole picture. Through the production of data on both men's and women's engagement in, and contribution to, agriculture, and the provision of information on the gender-specific terms and conditions of their engagement, FADN is essential for more gender-responsive and effective agricultural policy making.

The European Commission's **Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025** highlights the importance of quality care services for children and other dependents,

⁶⁹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1198/2014 of 1 August 2014 supplementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1217/2009 setting up a network for the collection of accountancy data on the incomes and business operation of agricultural holdings in the European Union, OJ L 321, 7.11.2014, p. 2–6. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32014R1198>

especially for women in rural areas.⁷⁰ This is also echoed in the European Commission's **Communication on the European Care Strategy**.⁷¹

BOX 7

Farm managers across EU Member States and the impact of demographic aging on agriculture

In Europe, the number of women in farming has been slowly increasing in recent years. The most recent data suggest that, on average, 29 per cent of farms across the EU are managed by a woman. However, there is great variation between EU Member States; in Lithuania and Latvia, for example, nearly half of all farms are managed by a woman. By contrast, in Malta, Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands, the proportion of female farm managers does not exceed 10 per cent.

This problem is particularly acute as attracting Europe's next generation of farmers is proving to be a key challenge. Europe's farming sector is dominated by an older population, and this is certainly true when it comes to women farmers. Current data shows that just 4.2 per cent of women farmers are under the age of 35. Given that 42 per cent of women working in agriculture are over 65 (in contrast to just 29.2 per cent for men), there is the potential for the farming gender gap to widen in future years. However, help is at hand for young women interested in a career in agriculture. Not only will the EU support new farmers through its usual income support system, it also provides rural development funds to help young women get started in farming, as well as support existing women farmers to modernize their business. These investments assist farms in the EU to stay competitive and help to provide young women and men farmers with a good standard of rural living. This commitment to addressing the EU's gender gap is enshrined in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): EU countries are required to consider the situation for women in rural areas when developing their rural development programs.

Source: European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (2021). *Females in the Field*. See: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/news/females-field-2021-03-08_en

70 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, COM/2020/152 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

71 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the European care strategy, COM/2022/440 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0440>

BOX 8

Examples of implementing gender-responsive agriculture policy in EU Member States

The EU CAP Network connects people and encourages colleagues from across Europe to learn from one another and exchange their experiences. Building on the EU CAP Network's work on enhancing gender equality in the EU agrifood system and on promoting gender equality in rural areas, a dedicated brochure highlights examples of CAP-funded projects led by women, and of initiatives that are advancing gender equality in rural areas. It presents concrete examples on how EU Member States foster more inclusive rural areas by promoting rural women's participation and recognition in local decision-making processes, businesses, and communities.

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2023-06/EUCAPNetwork_Rural-Women_Brochure_230627.pdf

SmartAgriHubs has worked with digital innovation in agriculture as a hub with a gender inclusiveness perspective to utilize the knowledge and skills of women. It is part of the EU's 'Horizon 2020' research and innovation programme.

<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/about-smartagrihubs/gender-equality>

In 2024, the EU launched "GRASS CEILING" – a multi-actor project which aims to empower rural women and increase the number of socio-ecological innovations led by women in agriculture, the rural economy, and rural communities. In collaboration with partners from nine EU countries, the project engages in key areas that shape women's involvement in innovative initiatives and socio-ecological transitions: (i) availability of gender data for policy analysis, foresight, and review of trends in agriculture and rural areas; (ii) understanding of drivers and barriers to women-led innovations in farming and rural communities; (iii) enhanced knowledge, skills, practical tools, joint learning, networking and exchange; (iv) routine benchmarking of key EU and national policies related to farming and rural development, as well as of legal frameworks for land transfers; (v) availability of policy tools and recommendations for inclusion of rural women and women farmers, and for women-led innovation; and (vi) awareness raising on women-led innovation, and networking with related national, EU-wide, and global initiatives.

<https://www.grassceiling.eu/>

3 LINKING AGRICULTURE WITH THE EU GENDER EQUALITY ACQUIS

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy which involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, budgets, spending programmes, project activities, regulatory measures, administrative functions, and institutional culture, with a view to promoting **equality between women and men**, and preventing and eliminating discrimination.

Gender mainstreaming ensures that policy-making and legislative work are of higher quality, and policies respond more effectively to the needs of all citizens – women and men, girls and boys. With gender mainstreaming, public interventions are more effective, ensuring that inequalities are not perpetuated.

The main objective of EU programmes in (pre-)accession countries is to support potential Member States to adopt and implement all reforms (political, institutional, legal, administrative, social, and economic) that are required to comply with EU values and align with EU rules, standards, policies, and practices. The accession criteria (Copenhagen Criteria) include clear preconditions for stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.⁷² Gender equality – as one of the key rule-of-law principles – forms an inherent part of the Enlargement Strategy.⁷³ Enlargement requires each accession country to adopt the body of common rights and obligations (EU *acquis*) that are binding for all EU member countries.⁷⁴ Gender equality is integral to accession and legal harmonization processes by applying the rights-based approach principles of (i) legality, universality, and indivisibility of human rights; (ii) participation; (iii) non-discrimination; (iv) accountability; and (v) transparency in each step of programming, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of EU support.

72 European Council of Copenhagen (21–22 June 1993). Conclusions of the Presidency. See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21225/72921.pdf>

73 Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions: A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, 2018, p.4. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0065>

74 EUR-Lex: Glossary of Summaries. Acquis. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/acquis.html>

At the EU level, the obligation to engage in gender mainstreaming emanates, from, among others:

- The Treaty of the European Union (TEU)⁷⁵;
- The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)⁷⁶ Articles 8 and 10, which mandate the EU and Member States to ensure gender equality goals are mainstreamed in all EU activities;
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004⁷⁷, “Implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services”;
- The Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006⁷⁸ “On the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation” (Recast Directive).

Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is clearly reflected in the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III (2021–2025)⁷⁹, and it is an integral part of the Regulations of the EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)⁸⁰: when accessing the EU, candidate countries are required to comply with the *acquis* on gender equality and non-discrimination.

75 Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>

76 Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

77 Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004. Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Men and Women in the Access to and Supply of Goods and Services. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32004L0113>

78 Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006 ‘On the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation’ (Recast Directive). See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0054>

79 Joint Communication of the European Parliament and the Council: EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment in EU external action. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0017>

80 Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No. 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 480/2009. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0947&from=EN>

At the **international level**, Albania has ratified essential international treaties and/or endorsed policies obliging the country to safeguard women’s rights and support gender equality, including:

- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN CEDAW)⁸¹;
- The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)⁸²;
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)⁸³;
- The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, “Women, Peace, and Security” (UNSCR 1325)⁸⁴;
- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Fundamental Conventions⁸⁵, and C190 concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.⁸⁶

81 United Nations General Assembly (1979). Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

82 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention>

83 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995). See: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

84 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security (2000). See: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2000/10/un-security-council-resolution-1325>

85 ILO NORMLEX [Online]. Up-to-date Conventions and Recommendations. See: <https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12020>

86 ILO (2019). Convention No.190 concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work: https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190; see also: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/violence-harassment/lang--en/index.htm>

BOX 9

UN CEDAW provisions to address critical issues faced by rural women

General CEDAW recommendations provide explicit entry points for gender mainstreaming in sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD) sectors through (i) General Recommendation No. 16: Unpaid women workers in rural and urban family enterprises; and (ii) General Recommendation No. 13: Equal remuneration for work of equal value.

CEDAW Article 14 makes special reference to rural women and requirements to ensure equality in planning processes, social and economic rights, and community organization. The minimum entry points for considering gender equality in the ARD context are:

- Access to key productive resources.
- Access to and control over land.
- Social rights: Education (continuing education); Employment opportunities (both unemployment and segregation of employment); Health (access to and quality of health care, reproductive health care); Nutrition quality; and Access to finances.
- Political participation, including participation in legal governance systems (associations, elected offices, administration).
- Out-migration from rural areas.

Source: United Nations General Assembly (1979). Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

EU Gender Law and EU GAP III are aligned with UN CEDAW and hence constitute an integral part of the EU accession process.

Establishing the enabling environment for diversification of rural employment and entrepreneurship requires strategic government decisions on investment in specific crops, animal farming, machinery, the key criteria for land use and acquisition, and – in the Albanian context – farm consolidation. Within these processes, it is important to recognize the entry points for identifying and targeting particularly disadvantaged groups, and to determine the gender-specific impacts of reforms on women and men farmers.

At the national level, the Albanian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender (Article 18/2).⁸⁷ Law No.9970, dated 24/07/2008, ‘On Gender Equality in Society’⁸⁸ defines the term “gender mainstreaming”. Law No.10221, dated 04/02/2010, ‘On Protection from Discrimination,’ amended in 2020⁸⁹, obliges public authorities in their entirety to promote equality and prevent discrimination in exercising their functions (Article 7, Protection from Discrimination). Furthermore, the law addresses structural and intersectional discrimination as well as the elimination of privilege.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021–2030, adopted through Council of Ministers’ (CoM) Decision No.400, dated 30/06/2021, through its Strategic Goal IV, establishes the “Application of gender mainstreaming as the main tool of achieving gender equality and gender justice in society”.⁹⁰ It foresees monitoring of new strategies that integrate a gender perspective, and the allocation of respectively matching budget allocations at central and municipal levels. Thereby, the NSGE provides the strategic framework for gender mainstreaming across sectors and levels of governance.

Albania’s Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries (SARDF) 2021-2027 refers to gender equality in a primarily declarative manner.⁹¹ The document lacks a gender perspective and, hence, is short of effective measures that address women’s systemic disadvantage in agriculture and aim at strengthening women’s role, position, and inclusion in the rural economy. As highlighted by the UN CEDAW Committee, the document needs to be aligned with obligations under CEDAW, in particular Articles 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16.⁹² Furthermore, harmonisation with national gender equality legislation and policy, as well as alignment with respectively relevant provisions under the EU

87 Constitution of the Republic of Albania. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/albania/41888>

88 Law No.9970, dated 24/07/2008 ‘On gender equality in society’, as published in the Official Gazette No. 125, dated 01/08/2008. See: <http://www.osce.org/albania/36682>

89 As amended by the Law No.124/2020. See: <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Law-on-Protection-from-Discrimination-Albania.-2020.pdf>

90 National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030, published in the Official Gazette No.112, dated 15/07/2021. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2021/112>. The English version is available at: https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/WEB_Strategjia%20Kombetare%20-%20EN.pdf

91 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2022). Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries 2021–2027, approved by Decision No. 460, dated 29 June 2022. Available at: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2022/100/6dea9d2c-c264-48a8-a9e1-d041781a823c;q=strategjia%20e%20bujqesise%20dhe%20zhvillimit%20rural>

92 UN CEDAW (2023). Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Albania, 2023. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en

legal and policy frameworks is needed. Recognizing the requirement of gender mainstreaming across all subsectors, gender equality outcomes also need to be addressed in related areas such as forestry, agritourism, integrated water resource management, fisheries, value chain and market system development, etc. Respective sector-specific gender mainstreaming guidance is available at EU- and international levels. Initial information on what is required, and how gender mainstreaming in agriculture and rural development can be done, is provided in the next section.

3.1. Alignment with EU Gender Action Plan III and relevant other indicators

As evidenced in documents such as Country Reports and Country Gender Profiles for Albania, significant gaps persist in addressing gender inequality issues and in the application of gender mainstreaming.⁹³ This also applies to policy areas in which women's unequal status is well documented and clearly evidenced by administrative data. Underlying reasons include:

- (i) The stereotypical and erroneous conceptualization of a 'standard citizen' who is a man;
- (ii) Limited gender mainstreaming capacity and skills within the administration;
- (iii) Absence of the obligation to conduct policy area-specific gender analysis on a routine basis; and
- (iv) Weak reflection of gender equality norms and standards in processes, procedures, and systems of governance.

A further obstacle is posed by the fact that individuals involved in the drafting of policies and programmes find it difficult to precisely pinpoint the main gender inequality issues in their specific area of engagement. Consequently, the vast majority of policies, plans, and programmes remain without concrete gender equality objectives.

⁹³ European Commission. EU Country Reports in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022; UNDP and UN Women (2016). Albania Gender Brief. See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/10/albania-gender-brief>; UN Women (2020). Albania Country Gender Equality Brief 2020. See: [https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/country-gender-equality-brief-albania-2020#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20UN%20Women's,Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20\(SDGs\)](https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/country-gender-equality-brief-albania-2020#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20UN%20Women's,Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20(SDGs))

Public policies are expected to work for specific outcomes. Indicators outline the regulatory markers of achievement of these outcomes. With regard to monitoring progress on gender equality, the indicators of the EU Gender Action Plan 2020–2025 (GAP III) serve as valuable guidance.⁹⁴ They illustrate what kind of change in the lives of women/girls and men/boys (i.e., outcomes) needs to be achieved and measured in a policy area.

The following table presents the alignment between (i) the EU Chapter relevant for a particular policy area; (ii) the respective national policy documents which shall accommodate the international gender equality considerations; and (iii) the specific EU GAP III indicators and EU CAP 2023-2027 indicators⁹⁵ which shall be reflected in national monitoring frameworks. The alignment is supplemented by listing matching SDG Indicators, which links gender mainstreaming in the EU accession process to gender equality goals at the global level. For the set of CEDAW Compliance Indicators specifically relevant to the issue of women in agriculture, see the dedicated tool prepared by FAO.⁹⁶

94 European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2020). Objectives and Indicators to Frame the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021–2025), p.27. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0284>

95 EU Common Agricultural Policy Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF) list of indicators. See: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-09/pmef-result-indicators_en.pdf

96 FAO (2013). CEDAW. A Tool for Gender-sensitive Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Programme Formulation – Guidelines for Ministries of Agriculture and FAO. See: <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/427019/>

TABLE 1

Alignment of Chapter 11 with EU GAP III indicators, EU CAP Gender indicators, and SDG indicators

Chapter 11 – Agriculture and rural development	
Related national strategic documents	<p>Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries (SARDF) 2021-2027</p> <p>Rural Development Programme 2021-2027 under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance of the Republic of Albania (IPARD III)</p> <p>Government Priorities on Agriculture and Rural Development 2021 – 2025</p> <p>Business and Investment Development Strategy 2021-2027 and its Action Plan</p> <p>National Strategy on Food Security (2023-2027)</p> <p>National Strategy for Gender Equality and Action Plan 2021-2030</p> <p>[draft] National Strategy on the Development of Agritourism 2024-2027</p> <p>[draft] National Strategy on Tourism Development 2024-2030</p>
Related EU GAP III Overall Thematic Objectives	<p>Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity, fully enjoy and exercise their equal economic, labour and social rights</p> <p>Women in all their diversity influence decision-making processes on environmental conservation and climate change policies and actions</p>
Related EU GAP III Thematic Objectives ...	<p>Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources</p> <p>Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy</p>

<p>•••</p>	<p>Improved access for women in all their diversity to managerial and leadership roles in social and economic sectors and fora</p> <p>Increased participation of women and girls in all their diversity in decision-making processes on environment and climate change issues</p> <p>Strategies and agreements on climate mitigation, adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity are more gender-responsive, at local, national, regional and international level</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, addressing climate change in their daily lives and preserving the natural environment are recognised and valued</p> <p>Women in all their diversity increasingly participate in and have improved access to jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities in the green economy and the circular economy</p>
<p>Related EU GAP III Indicators</p>	<p>Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women’s equal rights to land ownership and/or control (SDG 5.a.2)</p> <p>Number of policies, regulatory or legal reforms adopted to support women’s employment and entrepreneurship, such as in terms of ownership and land rights, inheritance, mobility, access to identification</p> <p>Number of relevant actors (private sector companies, ministries, etc.) influenced to adopt processes to improve women’s economic empowerment /to remove barriers to market access for women in a given sector (FPI RF)</p> <p>Number of practices aimed at removing barriers preventing women from market access, investment and business development (FPI RF)</p> <p>Number of beneficiaries, disaggregated at least by sex, with access to financial services: a) firms, b) individuals (EU RF 2.13)</p> <p>•••</p>

<p>•••</p>	<p>Number of gender-responsive policies approved by partner government in the green economy sector</p> <p>Number of gender-responsive policies approved by partner government in the circular economy sector</p> <p>Number of beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex, of business development services who registered their own business (including social enterprises) (i) in general; (ii) in the green economy sector; (iii) in the circular economy sector</p> <p>Number of women with increased training, financial resources, technology or other resources for sustainable and safe food production, sustainable energy, sustainable transport, and clean water sources, for family consumption or for productive uses</p> <p>Number of changes in legislation or new laws or amendments adopted in partner country to enshrine the equal access to property, including land, credit and inheritance rights of women and girls</p> <p>Number of women with increased training, financial resources, technology or other resources for sustainable and safe food production, sustainable energy, sustainable transport, and clean water sources, for family consumption or for productive uses</p> <p>Extent to which women's equal rights to landownership and inheritance are respected in practice</p> <p>Number of women and men headed enterprises receiving credit, micro-credit/financial services, disaggregated at least by sex</p> <p>% of women in managerial positions in enterprises in the green economy and the circular economy</p> <p>% of women and men workers in each stage of the value chain of a product related to green technologies or the circular economy, disaggregated at least by sex</p> <p>Number of women benefiting from incentives used to encourage women's entry into the green economy and the circular economy</p>
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<p>EU CAP Gender Indicators</p>	<p>Number of young farmers benefiting from setting up with government support, disaggregated by sex (CAP R.36); includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of young women/men farmers as part of rural business start-up • Complementary income support for young women/men farmers • Cooperation in the context of farm succession, in particular for generational renewal at farm level
<p>Gender-related SDG Indicators</p>	<p>Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable (SDG Indicator 1.3.1)</p> <p>Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status (SDG Indicator 2.3.2)</p> <p>Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex (SDG Indicator 5.a.1(a))</p> <p>Share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (SDG Indicator 5.a.1(b))</p> <p>Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control (SDG Indicator 5.a.2)</p> <p>Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG Indicator 5.c.1)</p> <p>Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location (SDG Indicator 5.4.1)</p>

3.2. Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) III: Gender mainstreaming as per the ‘NDICI Regulations’

Albania’s reform and accession agenda receives significant financial support through EU funding as well as directly from EU Member States. The EU as primary promoter of equality between women and men in the region has set clear standards, explicitly defined in the European Commission’s (EC’s) ‘Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument’ (NDICI) Regulations, adopted in June 2021.⁹⁷ These Regulations apply to EU IPA III actions to be funded and implemented in Albania, and they are explicit on gender equality requirements:

“[...] Strengthening gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Union’s external action and increasing efforts to reach the minimum standards of performance indicated by the EU Gender Action Plans should lead to a gender sensitive and transformative approach in all Union external action and international cooperation. At least 85 % of new actions implemented under the Instrument should have gender equality as a principal or a significant objective, as defined by the gender equality policy marker of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). At least 5 % of those actions should have gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment as a principal objective.”

In light of the EU NDICI Regulations, which foresee the target of 85 per cent gender-sensitive actions in the future, the Government of Albania needs to define – in concrete terms – the activities, structures, mechanisms, and capacities for implementing gender-sensitive actions as a requirement and precondition for successfully absorbing EU IPA III funds.

3.3. The OECD DAC gender equality policy marker

The OECD DAC gender equality policy marker⁹⁸ is a key monitoring and accountability tool in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Its aim is to identify

⁹⁷ Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0947&from=EN>

⁹⁸ OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) (2016). Definition and minimum recommended criteria for the DAC gender equality policy marker. See: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Minimum-recommended-criteria-for-DAC-gender-marker.pdf>

gaps between legal, policy, and financial commitments, and incentivize efforts to close them. Undertaking a gender analysis and pursuing a “do-no-harm” - approach are obligatory for all programs/actions.

Programs/actions that have been screened against the marker but not found to target gender equality are classified as Score 0. Such a score requires narrative justification. Programs/actions with gender equality as an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the program/action, are classified as Score 1. Programs/actions with gender equality as the main objective and fundamental in design and results are classified as Score 2.

The EU NDICI Regulations – which apply to, for example, IPA III Action Documents – make explicit reference to the obligatory application of the common minimum criteria for the three categories of the OECD DAC gender equality policy marker. They set a target of 85 per cent of all actions classified at least as Score 1, with 5 per cent qualified as Score 2. In practice, a Score 1 classification requires gender responsiveness to be reflected at the level of problem analysis, objectives, indicators, and targets.

Score 1 Definition:

- Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.
- The gender equality objective must be explicit in the project/programme documentation and cannot be implicit or assumed.
- The project/programme, in addition to other objectives, is designed to have a positive impact on advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.

TABLE 2

Minimum requirements for meeting OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker Score 1 criteria

Level	Requirement	Check	Action to be taken to get there
Problem analysis	An analysis of the status, role, position and situation of women/girls and men/boys in relation to the policy area/sector/sub-sector, in which the project/programme/action is embedded, has been conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whenever the gender analysis is inexistent, incomplete, or outdated, commission/undertake a sector- or sub-sector specific gender analysis
	Findings from the gender analysis:		
	- are included in the problem description	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	- are substantiated with numbers (gender statistics)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	- have informed the design of the project/programme/action	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	The main gender inequality issues specific for the policy area/sector/sub-sector are mentioned	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	The intervention adopts a “do no harm” approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex and further identity markers, where relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Objectives	Presence of at least one explicit gender equality objective (e.g., explicitly aiming at achieving gender equality goals), in line with the gender inequality issues described in the narrative analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make gender mainstreaming expertise an integral part of working groups that draft/review documents

Activities	Proposed activities specifically respond to the described situation of women/girls and men/boys, contribute to achieving gender equality outcomes, and prevent discrimination including structural and intersectional discrimination	□	Make gender mainstreaming expertise an integral part of working groups that draft/review documents
Indicators	Any gender equality objective formulated is backed by at least one gender-sensitive indicator, enabling the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification of gender gaps in benefiting from measures - monitoring of the impact of measures/activities on women/girls and men/boys 	□	Align with relevant EU and global indicators (such as SDGs, Eurostat/EU GAP III, and similar)
Targets	Specific values for women/girls and men/boys are set	□	Reflect the aim to close gender gaps/achieve gender equality outcomes when setting target values

The OECD DAC gender equality policy marker Score 2 classification requires that gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and fundamental in its design and expected results. Until now, the number and scope of EU IPA-funded actions that classify as Score 2 has remained very low.

Score 2 Definition:

- Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.
- The project/programme is designed with the principal intention of advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.

4 MAIN TOOLS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This section contains a selection of EU standardized gender mainstreaming tools to be applied in policy revision, strategic planning of line Ministries, programming, budgeting, and similar governance processes. The complete collection of EU standardized toolkits and materials, including elaborate descriptions of specific gender mainstreaming tools, is available on the website of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), accessible at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools>

Specific resources on how to mainstream gender in agricultural and rural development policy include:

4.1. Gender analysis

Gender analysis⁹⁹ provides the necessary data and information to integrate a gender perspective into policies, programmes, and projects. As a starting point for gender mainstreaming, gender analysis identifies the differences between and among women/girls and men/boys in terms of their relative position in society, and the distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power in a given context. In this way, conducting a gender analysis allows for the subsequent development of interventions that adequately address gender inequalities and meet the different needs of women/girls and men/boys. The purpose of gender analysis is to identify and address gender inequalities by:

- Acknowledging differences between and among women/girls and men/boys, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power;
- Ensuring that the different needs of women/girls and men/boys are clearly identified and addressed at all stages of the policy cycle;
- Recognizing that policies, programs, and projects can have different effects on women/girls and men/boys;
- Seeking and articulating the viewpoints of women/girls and men/boys and making their contribution a critical part of developing policies, programmes, and projects;

⁹⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming – More Methods and Tools: Gender Analysis. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis#:~:text=As%20a%20starting%20point%20for,power%20in%20a%20given%20context>

- Promoting women's participation and engagement in community, political, and economic life; and
- Supporting better informed, gender-responsive, and effective interventions.

Gender analysis includes consideration of women's particular experiences, roles, and responsibilities, and their level of access to resources and decision-making. Gender analysis also involves acknowledging the historical and social inequalities faced by women/girls, and aims to inform the design of policies, programmes, and projects to address – and to remedy – these inequalities.

A thorough gender analysis enables policymakers to understand gender inequalities in a given situation or sector. It describes the current state of contextual situations by gender, and also explores the causes and effects of gender disparities on the target group. Looking at the underlying causes of gender inequalities and discrimination assists in setting relevant and targeted objectives and measures to eliminate gender inequalities. In this way, gender analysis contributes to the improved gender responsiveness of policies and legislation, as it provides the basis for ensuring that the needs of all citizens – women, men, girls, and boys – are adequately addressed.

4.2. Gender statistics on agriculture and rural development in the Albanian context

Gender statistics describe or measure gender inequalities. They rely on data on individuals broken down by sex (i.e., collected and tabulated separately for women/girls and men/boys). These sex-disaggregated data reflect the realities of the lives of women/girls and men/boys, and the policy issues relating to gender. They allow for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions and are one of the requirements for obtaining gender statistics. For monitoring actual progress in gender equality, the concepts, definitions, and methods used in data production and analysis need to be designed in a way that they reflect gender roles, relations, and inequalities in society.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming – More Methods and Tools: Sex-disaggregated Data. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/sex-disaggregated-data>

In Albania, gender statistics are published annually in INSTAT's dedicated publication entitled 'Women and Men in Albania'.¹⁰¹ Its main objective is to make sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics available for the purpose of monitoring cross-sectorial policies with regard to achieving gender equality goals and sustainable development objectives. The publication contains not only administrative data, but also data based on social surveys conducted by INSTAT at the household unit.

Sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on agriculture and rural development are essential for developing effective policy responses and monitoring their impact on gender equality in the (sub-)sector. Gender-statistics specifically for the agricultural sector in Albania are in an early stage of alignment with UN and Eurostat standards. The Agricultural Census is planned for 2024 and provides an opportunity for integrating the four main areas of gender statistics¹⁰²: (i) information on the composition of farm labor recording sex and other characteristics of the household members and hired laborers; (ii) information on gender differences in the management of agricultural holdings, and on decision-making within the holding; (iii) information on gender differences in ownership of agricultural assets (such as land tenure, livestock and agricultural machinery); and (iv) information on gender differences in access to agricultural services and agricultural practices (such as use of formal credit, extension services, veterinary services, irrigation, and agricultural machinery), as well as rural development support measures. Full establishment of the EU Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) is pending. For gathering gender data in agriculture, FAO provides a resource on the interpretation and application of Article 14 CEDAW: 'A tool for gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policy and programme formulation Guidelines for Ministries of Agriculture and FAO'.¹⁰³ The tool is a starting point for identifying entry points for addressing gender equality goals in the sector and provides a list of indicators useful to governments.

101 See: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/gender-equality/#tab3>

102 UNSTATS (2016). Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics, p.142ff: Agricultural censuses and surveys. See: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/gender/Integrating-a-Gender-Perspective-into-Statistics-E.pdf>

103 FAO (2013). CEDAW. A tool for gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policy and programme formulation – Guidelines for Ministries of Agriculture and FAO. See: <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/427019/>

4.3. Gender impact assessment

Gender impact assessment is an EU-standardized method routinely used for *ex ante* evaluation of legal documents, strategic policy plans, and programmes under implementation.¹⁰⁴ Broader use of gender impact assessment helps policymakers and public servants to analyse and foresee the impact of any important decision under consideration on women/girls and men/boys, which helps to improve existing measures and inform decisions regarding budget allocation. The findings of any gender impact assessment should be made available on time, so that legal regulations and related policies can be amended during the design and planning stages.

“Gender impact assessment can be applied to legislation, policy plans, policy programmes, budgets, concrete actions, bills and reports or calls for research. Gender impact assessment methods do not only have to be applied to policy in the making, they can also be applied to existing policies. They can be used in the administration as well as by external actors; in both cases they require a considerable amount of knowledge of gender issues.”¹⁰⁵

In the framework of the GIZ-run ‘Support to Accession Negotiations for Albania in Economic Chapters of Acquis’ (SANECA) Project, the standard EU *ex-ante* Gender Impact Assessment tool was recently adapted to the Albanian context, with special focus on mainstreaming gender equality goals into the so-called EU “Internal Market Chapters” (i.e., Chapters 1, 3, 20, and 28).¹⁰⁶ In Kosovo, the Agency for Gender Equality – operating under the Prime Minister’s Office – prepared a dedicated Gender Impact Assessment Manual in 2019, supported with funding from Sweden.¹⁰⁷

104 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming – More Methods and Tools: Gender Impact Assessment. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment>

105 Council of Europe (2004). Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework, Methodology, and Presentation of Good Practices. See: <https://rm.coe.int/1680596135>

106 GIZ (2022). Gender Mainstreaming in the Internal Market Chapters of the Acquis – Guidelines and Tools. Accessible at: https://pubhtml5.com/qzcc/xxqq/Gender_Mainstreaming_in_the_Internal_Market_Chapters_of_the_Acquis/3

107 Republic of Kosovo Gender Equality Agency (2019). Gender Equality Impact Assessment Manual. Available at: <https://abgj.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Publikimet%20ABGJ/Gender%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20Manual.pdf>

4.4. Gender-responsive budgeting in agriculture and rural development

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a key process to incorporate a gender perspective in planning. It “seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment”.¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that gender-responsive budgeting is not about having a separate budget for women, nor does it mean to just increase spending on programmes for women. Examples of how to apply gender-responsive budgeting when mainstreaming gender in agriculture and rural development include¹⁰⁹:

- ✓ Embed gender-responsiveness into the governance of public service delivery in rural and remote areas, including the provision of social security and public healthcare services, and maternity and pension entitlements for woman farmers and workers under various schemes. This is in the context of increased energy and healthcare costs adding to the debt burden of farming households that are already reeling under acute agrarian distress.
- ✓ Beneficiary assessment and gender analysis of all financial allocations, subsidies, and investments in agriculture (assets, inputs, energy, irrigation, credit) across all schemes of ministries in charge of agriculture and rural development.
- ✓ Separate budgetary provision and targets for schemes and programmes that build technical capacities of women engaged in farming to take up sustainable farming and soil conservation; provide long-term capacity building of women on sustainable agriculture, credit, marketing, government schemes, financial literacy, enterprise management, legal literacy, etc.
- ✓ Allocate resources for enhancing gender mainstreaming capacity building at all levels and in ways that are adapted to the needs of different target groups, such as policy makers, agriculture officers and extension personnel, programme staff, staff of relevant local institutions, and service delivery institutions.

108 UN Women Asia and the Pacific [Online]. Gender Responsive Budgeting. Available at: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/gender-responsive-budgeting>, 1st para; and OECD (2017). Gender Budgeting in OECD countries. See: <https://www.oecd.org/gender/Gender-Budgeting-in-OECD-countries.pdf>

109 Based on UN Women (2017). Gender Responsive Budgeting: A Focus on Agriculture Sector. See: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEA/Docs/Publications/2017/12/Gender-Responsive%20Budgeting-Agriculture%20Sector.pdf>

4.5. Gender-responsive public procurement

Gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP) is procurement that promotes gender equality through the goods, services, or works being purchased. This means that buyers and suppliers (i) examine the impact of all contracted activities on women's and men's needs, interests, and concerns; and (ii) design and deliver contracts in a way that reduces inequalities. GRPP does not necessarily entail higher costs but does require knowledge and capacity.¹¹⁰

Public procurement/outsourcing to private companies which hire external labor can positively impact local employment in general and women's employment opportunities in particular. Clauses that refer to obligatory social deliverables (e.g., the share of locally contracted workers per category, the share of women to be employed, the obligation to reduce gender inequalities, adherence to gender equality principles, and similar) can be integrated in the calls for proposals to funding programmes. Such gender clauses can also be included in the terms of reference in calls for contractors to be hired for policy support services. This will ensure that projects and services receiving funds have gender capacity on board, respond to the different needs of women/girls/men/boys, and contribute to achieving gender equality.¹¹¹

The European Commission explicitly states in its Gender Equality Strategy for 2020–2025 that “[t]he Commission's guidance on socially responsible public procurement will fight discrimination and promote gender equality in public tenders”.¹¹² GRPP has its legal basis in the EU's financial Regulations and the EU legal framework for public procurement. The legal framework has evolved into a comprehensive set of rules and principles governing the award of public contracts. On 24 April 2023, the European Council adopted new rules on pay

110 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming – More Methods and Tools: Gender-responsive Public Procurement. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-responsive-public-procurement>

111 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (2016). Gender and Digital Agenda. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-and-digital-agenda>

112 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions – A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020) 152, 5.3.2020. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

transparency through the Pay Transparency Directive.¹¹³ Article 24 specifically addresses the obligation to ensure that, **in the performance of public contracts or concessions**, economic operators comply with their obligations relating to the principle of equal pay. Furthermore, EU companies are required to share information on salaries and take action, if their gender pay gap exceeds 5 per cent. The directive also includes provisions on compensation for victims of pay discrimination and penalties, including fines, for employers who break the rules.

Other examples of GRPP include, for example, Switzerland, where any company that does business with the government is required to pay male and female staff equally. In Spain, the Public Procurement Law includes various gender equality clauses that refer to different phases of the procurement procedure, from contractor selection to the execution of public contracts. Anyone with a conviction for violating workers' rights, including any conduct that violates the rights and opportunities of women – such as discrimination or harassment – is not entitled to sign contracts with public sector organizations. Companies with more than 250 employees that have not implemented gender equality plans are also prohibited from participating in public procurement contracting.¹¹⁴

UN Women promotes additional methods which benefit the economy, such as championing procurement rules that privilege bids from women-owned businesses and the promotion of companies beyond the common business circles, thereby widening the spectrum of employment opportunities and creating new markets.¹¹⁵ For detailed EU Guidance on GRPP see EIGE's Step-by-step Toolkit: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0821357enn_002.pdf; as well as: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-responsive-public-procurement>.

4.6. Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is used to reveal whether a programme addresses the different priorities and needs of women/girls

113 Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 on strengthening the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms (Pay Transparency Directive) (Text with EEA Relevance), OJ L 132, 17.5.2023, p. 21–44. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023L0970>

114 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2022). Gender-responsive Public Procurement: Step-by-step Toolkit. See: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0821357enn_002.pdf

115 UN Women (2017). The Power of Procurement: How to Source from Women-owned Businesses. See: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/the-power-of-procurement>

and men/boys. The aim is to assess whether it has the intended (but also unintended) impact on gender relations, and to determine the gender aspects that need to be integrated into monitoring and evaluation systems. Effective gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation need to include both qualitative and quantitative data that measure the impact on gender relations. Without sufficient data, a meaningful analysis of the impact on gender equality is very difficult. This implies that all data should be collected, presented, and analysed at minimum in a sex-disaggregated manner.¹¹⁶ Results and insights from gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation also feed into the policy cycle: they identify those aspects for which inclusion of explicit gender equality objectives and indicators would be required at the planning stage.

For example, monitoring reports increasingly include sex-disaggregated information on the number of officials participating in trainings and other capacity building activities, which is already a good start for gender-sensitive monitoring. However, the monitoring exercise would benefit considerably if additional gender aspects were part of this process, including the impact of activities on gender inequalities. In any case, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of agricultural policies requires consistent gender mainstreaming in these policies, including establishment of gender-related indicators.

¹¹⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Thesaurus [Online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1217?lang=en>

5 KEY RECOMMENDED ACTION IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Conducting gender mainstreaming interventions includes capacity building for undertaking gender analysis, as well as the active involvement of gender mainstreaming specialists throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring of strategies and policies. Moreover, already existing policies under implementation should also be reviewed for their gender responsiveness (i.e., assessing how well they address gender inequalities in the sector/policy area). If needed, these policies are then to be revised in order to mainstream gender equality within sectoral strategies, and into the structures, systems, and processes of all institutions involved.

Consequently, given that the effects of agricultural governance are not gender neutral, it is necessary to establish a dialogue between those drafting agricultural policy, programmes, and support schemes, and those working toward gender equality and equity. A common greater understanding of the linkages between gender inequality, agriculture, and rural development would bring public policy priorities closer together on both issues, and enable the development of specific coordinated and articulated actions to address the overlapping and converging issues.

To empower women in agriculture and the rural economy, the broad policy measures that are urgently required include:

- Addressing the lack of visibility and identity of women working in agriculture.
- Securing women's rights over resources, both individual and common, such as land, water, etc.
- Creating and ensuring entitlements over agricultural services (credit, insurance, technologies, extension services, inputs such as seeds, etc.) on par with male farmers.
- Providing social protection cover in the form of better working conditions, equal wages, pensions, childcare support, maternity entitlements, etc.
- Guaranteeing equal space for women in all decision-making bodies related to agriculture and rural development.

More specific policy recommendations flowing from the above-identified key gender issues in Albania are presented in the following table.

TABLE 3

Priority actions for integrating gender equality goals into agriculture and rural development¹¹⁷

Main Gender Issues	Priority Actions
<p>Women’s work in agriculture substantially contributes to the economy, yet their role remains largely unrecognized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Apply a gender-sensitive value chain and market system development approach to all agricultural projects and initiatives. ☑ Undertake communication, information, and awareness campaigns with an explicit focus on promoting women’s work and their essential role in, and contribution to, agriculture, food security, agrotourism, rural development, etc. ☑ INSTAT to fully align the methodology for calculating the gender pay gap with EU/ILO standard.
<p>Gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices limit women’s access to essential resources for basic agricultural production</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Address intersecting forms of discrimination against rural women and women working in agriculture. ☑ Promote, support and ensure preschool education in rural areas for its dual effect of increasing the quality of education for children and of reducing the childcare load for rural women. ☑ Consider disaggregation of the farmer’s card: introduce the feature of specifying women as farm co-owners/co-administrators to ensure that rural women are in the position to make decisions on their own about the use of their land and to apply for funds. This will increase women’s bargaining power, participation in local networks, and access to programme funds.

¹¹⁷ Recommendations are based on and adapted from those brought forward in various resources including: European Commission (2023). Albania Report 2023; FAO (2016). Gender, Agriculture, and Rural Development in Albania; FAO (2020). Smallholders and Family Farms in Albania. Country Study Report 2019; State Supreme Audit Institution (2023). Women’s Economic Empowerment in Albania. Performance Audit Report; UN CEDAW (2023). Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Albania; UN Women (2017). Gender Responsive Budgeting: A Focus on Agriculture Sector.

<p>•••</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Ensure women engaged in farming are included in trainings on plants and varieties in view of soil parameters and production technology, leading to a high-quality product; and women engaged in harvesting are informed about using appropriate and sustainable harvesting and post-harvesting practices. ☑ Design communication channels and regular dissemination of specific information about new technologies, hygiene standards, marketing standards and product quality in line with EU requirements that reach both women and men, including from remote areas and from vulnerable groups.
<p>Agricultural extension services predominantly cater to men</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Provide a demand-driven extension service that is equally accessible for, and used by, women and men in rural and remote areas. ☑ Offer services that encompass not only agriculture-related topics but also cover bookkeeping and accounting, business management, marketing, food processing, income diversification, preparation of investment plans, tourism, and environmentally and socially sustainable development. ☑ Undertake a gender (impact) assessment of the strategic plan for the reform of the agricultural advisory system and integrate all elements necessary for ensuring inclusive and gender-responsive outreach. ☑ Conduct gender trainings for all technical and managerial staff of the agricultural advisory system and include gender expertise as a requirement in job descriptions. ☑ Include training on gender-sensitive methods and tools in agricultural extension curricula. ☑ Significantly increase the number of women extensionists and ensure they can deliver services under adequate working conditions and with appropriate equipment to be able to reach the beneficiaries. ☑ Track inclusive outreach and its territorial coverage, and monitor impact.

<p>Low levels of farm (co-) registration limit women's access to economic opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Strengthen women's legal rights by reviewing the legal notion of the "agricultural family" definition and align with EU standards/legislation. ☑ Introduce the joint titling of farms and the figure of the farm co-manager, established by law in EU countries such as Belgium and Spain, as a method for reducing the informality of the work of women and increasing their access to social protection, income, and decision-making. ☑ Revise the rules and improve the enforcement of land registration of all legal owners (avoid registration/identification on the single name of the so-called "head of the household), in line with CEDAW. ☑ Ensure that sex-disaggregated information on land registration is collected by immovable property registrations, in line with SDG target 5.a.
<p>Women have limited (co-) ownership of farms and agricultural enterprises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Revise social assistance programs and strengthen their gender-responsiveness, with the aim to establish an enabling environment for self-employed women and men working in agri-food systems. ☑ Substantially increase the budget on social assistance. ☑ Provide incentives for women's (co-)registration of agricultural enterprises and farms. ☑ Conduct information, awareness and outreach campaigns on the benefits, exact procedures for, and opportunities of women's (co-)registration of agricultural enterprises and farms.

<p>Women in rural areas have limited access to the resources required to engage in business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduce fiscal incentives to small and medium enterprise development and start-ups located in rural areas, particularly to those that are owned by women and/or employ a significant number of women. ✓ Adopt and implement a strategy to ensure that women and girls in rural and remote areas have adequate access to ICT. ✓ Enhance fixed internet broadband penetration in rural areas. ✓ Enhance financial literacy of smallholders and family farmers, particularly women and girls, through trainings by advisory services and other actors. ✓ Provide long-term capacity building of women engaged in agri-food systems on sustainable agriculture, credit, marketing, government schemes, financial literacy, enterprise management, legal literacy, etc. ✓ Conduct nation-wide, tailor-made business skills and entrepreneurship trainings for women in rural areas. ✓ Ensure rural women's access to affordable, high-quality business development services that cater to their needs. ✓ Introduce a small-loan guarantee scheme for women-owned/-managed small enterprises and/or women groups engaged in agri-food systems.
<p>Women farmers are weakly represented in rural organizations, associations, and decision-making bodies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthen the capacity of mainstream farmers/producer associations, organizations, and other groups to be inclusive (in terms of gender, age, etc.), including by creating fair and transparent criteria for women's participation, and their representation in leadership and decision-making positions, in these organizations. ✓ Provide gender-sensitive technical assistance and coaching on establishing and managing inclusive farmer groups, and support these farmers' groups in designing gender-responsive programmes. ✓ Develop and implement policies and programmes that support organizations of rural women, and women farmers and producers in competing effectively in the agriculture sector.

<p>Rural service provision and infrastructure do not meet women’s and girls’ needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Based on the 2023 census data, engage in a population-based costing of all services at local/ municipal level, especially those that women and disadvantaged population groups depend on. ✓ Complete the decentralisation process by progressing with citizen-centric fiscal decentralisation to ensure adequate funds and delivery of services at local level. ✓ Ensure rural women’s adequate access to quality health care, sexual and reproductive health services, childcare services, public transportation services, and social protection and other basic services. ✓ Continue investing in rural infrastructure, which is key for the social and economic development of family farms and its members, with emphasis on roads, piped water, electricity, and ICTs. ✓ Increase budgetary allocations for health services particularly for women and older women in rural and remote areas. ✓ Invest in and create infrastructure, community facilities, and on- and off-farm care services for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. ✓ Implement effective decentralisation.
<p>Agricultural vocational education does not support career perspectives for women and girls</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Undertake a comprehensive and gender-responsive reform of agricultural vocational education to make VET more relevant to girls, the needs of farming women, and the market. ✓ Empower agricultural VET schools and enhance gender capacity of all staff to credibly engage in gender-responsive education and training. ✓ Promote agricultural VET schools as an employment mechanism and support entrepreneurship and employment of female and male graduates in rural areas. ✓ Invest in accompanying measures such as didactics, violence- and (sexual) harassment-free school environment, quality and safety of dormitories, and similar.

<p>•••</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scale up mentoring programmes for women and girls from rural areas. ✓ Undertake affirmative action measures in support of girl students from rural areas, such as dedicated scholarships. ✓ Provide flexible vocational training for areas with difficult access and promote mobile training centres. ✓ Promote exchange and collaboration with women farmers and women cooperatives when showcasing demonstration plots and best practice. ✓ Improve transportation to schools, with particular focus on ensuring that it is safe and user-friendly for both boys and girls.
<p>National policies, programs, budgets, and support schemes in agriculture respond insufficiently to women’s needs</p> <p>•••</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Integrate a gender equality perspective across all sections of the 2021-2027 Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, including in its measures and the performance monitoring framework. ✓ Adopt temporary special measures in line with Directive 2010/41/EU, Article 5, with the aim to ensure full equality in practice between men and women in the agricultural sector. ✓ Undertake a beneficiary assessment and gender analysis of all financial allocations, subsidies, schemes, and investments in agriculture (assets, inputs, energy, irrigation, credit, etc.). ✓ Closely monitor the gender equality impact of all special measures employed and adjust to meet equity targets. ✓ Establish and routinely undertake EU-aligned gender impact assessment of (i) all ongoing support and credit schemes for farmers; (ii) support measures for agritourism; (iii) support measures for agrifood systems; (iv) support measures and investments in rural development.

<p>•••</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Increase policy efforts towards raising the share of women beneficiaries of schemes; orient funding towards women by revising eligibility criteria and introducing special measures. ☑ Support women and women's groups in applying for government-funded and/or donor-funded grants. ☑ Ensure the effective participation of rural women in consultative processes on draft policies, programmes, and schemes in agriculture. ☑ Enhance participation of local women in the design and implementation of initiatives concerning natural resource management such as water, land use, climate change, the conservation of biodiversity, and cultural heritage. ☑ Pursue a holistic, pro-poor and gender-responsive approach to agriculture and rural development that involves social protection, infrastructure, social welfare, and economic development. ☑ Use the IPARD III gender equality regulations as orientation for alignment with EU gender equality standards in the disbursement of funds. ☑ Step up efforts in gender-responsive budgeting at MARD, and follow up on the respective findings of the State Supreme Audit Institution (Performance Audit Report 2023). ☑ Allocate resources for enhancing gender mainstreaming capacity and skills among ARD policy makers, agriculture officers and extension personnel, programme staff, staff of relevant local institutions, and service delivery institutions. ☑ In revising/updating existing legislation and the drafting of new legislation, policies, and strategies ensure that they adhere to standards on gender-inclusive language.
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Gaps in gender statistics and data on agriculture and rural development

- ✓ Enhance capacities of the agriculture statistical department at MARD for data collection and processing, including sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics in line with Eurostat and SDG indicator requirements.
- ✓ MARD to follow up on the gender-sensitive performance monitoring indicators identified in the Performance Audit Report (2023) of the State Supreme Audit Institution.
- ✓ Across the questionnaire(s) of the Agricultural Census include all relevant gender-sensitive elements in alignment with Eurostat and FAO standards for gender statistics in agriculture.
- ✓ Develop a complete, fully accessible, and sex-disaggregated farm register, which includes the feature of co-registration of farm co-managers.
- ✓ Along with the farm register, develop a Land Parcel Information System, an animal register, and a Farm Accountancy Data Network. These represent important preconditions for implementing specific investment support policies in line with EU regulations.
- ✓ Step up efforts in setting up the Farm Accountancy Data Network to ensure availability of data and gender statistics related to small farms.
- ✓ Periodically produce and publish EU-aligned administrative statistics on the rural population, based on the EU population grid classification and broken down by all relevant categories (sex, age, ability, socio-economic status, etc.).



JUSTICE

ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

HEALTH

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH