

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Areas for joint actions in the Western Balkans



#listentowomen
#WBWomenPower



- Bringing in reforms for long-term and systemic change
- Fostering regional cooperation and partnerships

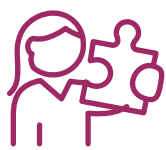
Overall outcomes would lead to reducing gender gaps and development of the Western Balkans Six

- Increase in women's labour force participation and entrepreneurship → increase in Western Balkan GDP by up to 20%
- Women's leadership in politics and the economy → boost innovation and growth
- Higher women's representation → higher quality of governance
- Higher number of women in companies' top-management → sustained profitable growth



Key priorities

1. Accelerate women's entrepreneurship



Only

27.5%

of business owners are women mostly operating in smaller, non-capital-intensive and low-income sectors, lacking access to credit and networking opportunities

ACTIONS

- Increase women's access to finance, especially in rural areas, through grant schemes and training programmes
- Create gender-sensitive business training and entrepreneurship upskilling programmes
- Boost networking opportunities for businesswomen across the Western Balkans and with the European Union
- Encourage innovation investments and support women-owned businesses

2. Reduce gender gaps in digitalisation and STEM



The share of women in STEM occupations is

14%

due to gender stereotypes, pay gaps and gender bias that prevent many girls in the region from choosing education in STEM fields

ACTIONS

- Promote formal and non-formal STEM-related education among girls and women
- Support women's employment in STEM fields by reducing gender discrimination in recruitment, promotions and gender pay
- Encourage employers and policymakers to adopt an ecosystem approach to assess how women are progressing along the digital inclusion continuum
- Develop a sub-regional online advocacy platform to promote gender equality in STEM fields

3. Recognise and redistribute unpaid work and invest in the care economy

Western Balkan women perform on average

3 times more

unpaid work than men and spend about half as much time in paid work where they account for almost 80% of workers in low-paid care sectors



ACTIONS

- Promote recognition of unpaid care work volume
- Support public investment in care sectors and ensure decent work and social protection for paid care workers, including migrant workers
- Promote employer- or state-funded provision of childcare or tax policies that encourage both spouses to work
- Encourage the adoption of flexible work arrangements
- Support businesses investing in childcare plans with subsidies and grants

4. Promote women's leadership and access to decent work



40% of the total employed in the Western Balkans are women and more than 23% of them hold insecure jobs

ACTIONS

- Assess policies and advocate for decent work
- Ensure equal opportunities and treatment in employment
- Ensure flexible work arrangements and a safe working environment
- Establish a gender monitor to measure progress made
- Establish a leadership academy to ensure gender equality in economy, digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

5. Transform the public and private sectors to deliver gender equality

Only 14.2% of companies' top managers are female



and even though nearly half of all public administration employees are women, they are mostly concentrated in lower paid branches

ACTIONS

- Develop accountability frameworks in public institutions and the private sector
- Make gender-responsive budgeting mandatory gender standards
- Step up women's participation in the boards of financial and governing institutions and companies
- Facilitate mentorship programmes to advance women in leadership positions
- Introduce a certification for gender equality in the public and private sectors
- Promote gender parity in leadership and flexible work arrangements