

## OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-BIH\_D\_1.1

**By 2025, people contribute to, and benefit from more accountable and transparent governance systems that deliver quality public services, and ensure rule of law**

Throughout the year, important progress was made towards achieving this outcome . Government institutions made progress in implementing gender-responsive policy making, budgeting and integration of EU gender equality and women’s empowerment commitments . This is evidenced by improved gender responsive budget circulars (at the level of BiH, Federation BiH, Canton Sarajevo); the establishment of gender responsive SDG Financing Framework as a comprehensive blueprint for integrated sustainable development; and increased demand for gender responsive accountability of institutions by supreme audit institutions. These results are a result of multiple interventions in the area of gender responsive programming and budgeting, implementation of national and international normative commitments, women’s political participation and leadership, and the country’s path to EU accession, while utilizing the coordination mandate and promoting accountability for the implementation of gender equality commitments. UN Women contributed to these changes through intensive advocacy and advisory work in the area of gender responsive governance in BiH. This included regional programs and exchanges, strategic guidance and gender analyses, local and regional trainings, and advocating with key ministries and institutions to effectively contribute to these changes. UNDP and the key government institutions in BiH, including gender institutional mechanisms, ministries of finance, supreme audit institutions and local governments partnered with UN Women to achieve these results. This outcome represents the third condition for substantive equity identified in the office’s theory of change. The theory of change understands that, if relevant institutions have the necessary capacities which ensure gender-responsive analysis, planning, policy making, budgeting and integration of EU gender equality and women’s empowerment commitments across sectors, then governance will be more accountable and transparent, especially in a gender-transformative way. The results achieved under this outcome (improved gender responsive budget circulars, the establishment of gender responsive SDG Financing Framework, and increased demand for gender-responsiveness by supreme audit institutions) contribute towards the necessary changes in relevant institutions outlined in the theory of change. We expect these changes to contribute to more accountable and transparent governance, thus the theory of change is still relevant.

## OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-BIH\_D\_2.1

**By 2025, people benefit from resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth ensured by the convergence of economic development and management of environment and cultural resources**

UN Women made significant progress towards achievement of the outcome in providing a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economy through the implementation of a three-stream approach through improvement of national laws and policies in cooperation with different governmental levels, raising capacities of government institutions and women entrepreneurs, and piloting adequate measures to address identified barriers through UN Women’s knowledge generation, which contributed to the theory of change for this outcome area. National laws and policies were strengthened and new policies developed that address the unproportionate care burden in households and unpaid care work, and mechanisms were established to ensure gender-sensitive criteria mechanisms are in place in relevant

governmental institutions. Under the UN Women and FAO Joint Programme "Women Driving Resilience in Agriculture and Rural areas", ten institutions participating in the Advisory Board for Women's Entrepreneurship in BiH increased their capacities in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of BiH and five governmental institutions increased their capacities in the area of care economy through UN Women's programming activities under the joint UN Women, UNDP and UNICEF SDG Rollout Joint Programme. As a result of UN Women's support, women have increased knowledge and capacities to secure their livelihoods and jobs and further develop their businesses through investments which will result in higher returns on the investment rate, year turnover, and new job opportunities. Participation of women in the workforce, as well as in entrepreneurial activities, is very low in BiH and it is hindered by a number of challenges. These include limited business skills and opportunities to gain them, and limited access to finance, information, markets, and other needed resources. UN Women continued investing in the BizUp programme supporting 15 selected women entrepreneurs in the process of receiving tailor-made support in online education, individual mentoring support, designated expert support in (re)branding, copywriting, and/or SEO optimization, and receiving small grants. UN Women, with the support of implementing partner, Foundation 787, achieved this result via the BizUP programme. The programme builds the capacities and resilience of businesses based on a concrete business diagnostic process. Important progress was also made to connect women entrepreneurs with investment opportunities. UN Women in cooperation with F787 implemented the Business Angel Summit along with the Women Entrepreneurs Expo, which laid the ground for broader development of businesses in the country, with a particular emphasis on women-owned enterprises. These initiatives place a strong emphasis on engaging male and female investors, ensuring the creation of a more inclusive and diverse investment landscape in the future. As a result, 122 women have knowledge of alternative financing and how to approach investors when seeking investments or strategic partners to further develop their businesses. Governmental institutions and other relevant stakeholders have the required knowledge to pursue changes at a macro level in the area of women's entrepreneurship and provide relevant strategies and recommendations to further advance the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. To create a fertile ground for broader women's entrepreneurship development, it is also important to have a stronger approach to building an entrepreneurial ecosystem that drives economic growth by building a supportive environment for new and growing companies to thrive, and by challenging gender stereotypes. The entrepreneurial ecosystem includes people, initiatives, and organizations that enable and advance the growth of entrepreneurs in a cohesive, self-sustaining, and connected way. It implies an approach that helps move from supporting one business at a time to creating a system that moves the entire community forward. Taking this system-based approach showed to support leveling the playing field for women, creating more opportunities, and increasing the visibility of the success of female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses. Therefore, one of the UN Women's Advisory Board for Women's Entrepreneurship Development in developing strategies for applying a gender lens to the role they can play in the female entrepreneurial ecosystem, how to use the unique position of power to influence positive change and to capacitate existing ecosystem stakeholders to reach common goals jointly. The aim of the intervention is to facilitate the work of the Advisory Board to create a strategy for the ecosystem development in the area of women entrepreneurship in BiH by applying the thorough mapping of the existing knowledge, measures, and stakeholders, organizing meetings to foster the cooperation between identified stakeholders (domestic and abroad) to prepare proposals, advocacy and lobbying activities that will be captured in the strategy and implemented in partnership with Advisory Board members. This outcome represents the first condition for substantive equity identified in the office's theory of change. The theory of change understands that, if 1) Governments have improved capacities to promote labour policies that enhance women's access to decent work and promote income security; 2) Women owned/women-led businesses and women entrepreneurs have strengthened capacities and resilience; then women will benefit from more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable growth. The results achieved under this outcome (more gender sensitive laws and policies, increased economic opportunities for women through skill development, business growth, and linkage with investors, knowledge production to advance the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country) reflect both capacity and performance improvements amongst governments, women owned/led businesses, and the entrepreneurial sector (thus, even going slightly beyond the ToC). This demonstrates changes outlined in the theory of change are

occurring. We expect these changes to contribute to resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth, thus the theory of change is still relevant.

### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-BIH\_D\_3.3

#### **By 2025, people have access to better quality and inclusive health and social protection systems**

Important progress was made towards the outcome. Legislative and institutional frameworks for combating violence against women and domestic violence in BiH were strengthened. Significant support was provided to civil society partners to improve institutional responses and contribute to raising awareness, including tackling harmful attitudes among the general public and targeted groups of people such as youth, religious leaders, service providers, governmental officials and media. Significant milestones were achieved in advancing legal reforms and promoting gender equality, including efforts to enhance protection against sexual harassment through targeted amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republika Srpska, and ensure alignment with Istanbul Convention standards. Notable improvements include the elimination of hierarchical relationships between victims and perpetrators, expanding the scope of the offense. The incorporation of modern technologies as an aggravating circumstance further strengthens the legal framework, contributing to specific and general prevention measures. Addressing the pressing issue of femicide, in light of increased high profile cases in 2023, UN Women actively engaged decision-makers in ongoing efforts to amend the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in both entities, with a focus on including a clear definition of femicide. The organization's proactive involvement, including collaboration with leading international experts, played a pivotal role in shaping legislative changes to address femicide cases. UN Women's multi-sectoral approach to domestic violence involved collaborative efforts with relevant ministries, resulting in formal endorsements of recommendations for amendments to internal organizational rulebooks. This collective commitment aims to ensure more effective responses to domestic violence by aligning internal regulations with specific laws on protection. Education and awareness initiatives have been integral to UN Women's strategy, including the integration of domestic violence topics into the curriculum of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Police Academy. Additionally, evidence-based programs in high schools and collaboration with media outlets aim to combat gender stereotypes and prioritize the fight against Violence Against Women (VAW) through responsible reporting. Capacity-building and training efforts have yielded significant progress, with 400 service providers trained and the capacities of 30 institutions strengthened at various levels, aligning with the Istanbul Convention. This comprehensive approach contributes to influencing normative and policy processes to safeguard women from domestic and sexual violence. The establishment of Minimum Standards for Crisis Centers for Victims of Sexual Violence and the development of Standard Operating Procedures for a Multisectoral Response to Sexual Violence demonstrate UN Women's commitment to spearheading advancements in support services. Innovations, such as a software database implemented in organizations managing safe houses, have significantly improved record-keeping standards, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of support services for victims of domestic violence. Overall, these achievements reflect UN Women's comprehensive and impactful efforts in addressing gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This outcome represents the second condition for substantive equity identified in the office's theory of change. The theory of change understands that, if 1) legislators and institutions have the capacities to incorporate the highest level of international standards on EAW in legislation, policies and budgets, 2) women, girls, men and boys at community and individual level are able to mobilize actors, resources and capacities to create an environment for zero tolerance to violence; 3) General and specialist service providers have improved capacities to deliver quality, accessible and survivor-centred services; then women will have access to better quality and inclusive health and social protection systems and experience less gender-based violence. The results achieved under this outcome (changes to legal and criminal codes, amendments to internal ministry rulebooks, policy academy curricula, school reporting practices, and the enhanced role of women CSOs in raising awareness) reflect changes in both the capacity and performance

of key institutions and individuals. Thus, changes outlined in the theory of change are occurring. We expect these changes to contribute to stronger health and protection systems and less gender-based violence, so the theory of change is still relevant.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-BIH\_D\_4.1

#### **By 2025, there is stronger mutual understanding, respect and trust among individuals and communities**

The work under this outcome was initiated in November 2023, following the signature of the joint PBF funded initiatives Women lead the way towards peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Outcome level progress will be reported in 2024.