

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

### **Duty bearers implement and finance evidence-based gender-responsive normative frameworks and policies, including in the context of crisis response and recovery.**

The outcome was not fully achieved, however significant progress has been made in the implementation and financing of gender response normative frameworks and policies. Key legislative enhancements have been made by ECA countries/territories that have further institutionalized and ensured the sustainability of financing and implementation of governmental gender equality legislation and commitments at national and local levels. In the Western Balkans, governments have adopted two new national policies and laws in 2022 that directly regulate gender mainstreaming in the budgetary processes. In North Macedonia, the new Organic Budget Law includes gender budgeting as part of the budget planning process. The Law includes the definition of key terminology, such as the principle of gender equality, gender responsive budgeting, gender responsive budget statement, and gender indicators and an obligation to report on gender responsive indicators and achieved goals and results. In Kosovo, the government adopted a new Concept Document on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) which represents a critical step in the ongoing process of institutionalization of gender responsive budgeting. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the government initiated a participatory process to develop the next Gender Action Plan for the period beyond 2022, and at the local level, 65 local governments introduced policies and are implementing gender responsive budgeting. UN Women has provided critical technical support to governments in all countries and territories in the process of policy formulation. Four countries (Albania, Armenia, Serbia and Ukraine) from ECA region are among 19% of the countries that have systems in place to track investments in gender equality (according to data on the implementation of SDG 5c1 indicators received from 69 countries). UN Women provided direct technical support to the Governments of Serbia and Albania in achieving this result. North Macedonia and Kosovo significantly improved the gender responsiveness of their legal frameworks related to budget laws and budget preparation and BiH, Belarus, Georgia, Tajikistan and Moldova invested heavily in capacity building of public administration at the national and local level to integrate gender in the budgetary and policy process. In Albania, budgetary allocation for gender equality increased from 1% in 2015 (38.4 million USD) to 9% in 2023 (480.9 million USD), while Bosnia and Herzegovina reported an average of 4.54% of its annual budgetary allocations (of selected state and entity line ministries) in 2022. Governments of Armenia and Georgia strengthened their national capacity to design and collect gender related indicators on emerging issues such as measuring unpaid domestic and care work as a result of conducting the first-time use survey. This critical data will enable the country to fill in specific data gaps and start monitoring the progress towards achieving the target 5.4 of SDG 5. In Kazakhstan, the Government has been supported to design and collect data on VAW, one of the commitments undertaken within the framework of gender equality action coalition on gender-based violence. UN Women ECARO has provided methodological guidance and financial support to the National Statistical Office of these countries throughout the whole cycle of data collection and analysis, including strengthening the catalytic partnership and south-south cooperation across countries in the region. There are still remaining challenges that need to be addressed to advance further progress, including increasing political will towards enacting meaningful legal frameworks that promote gender equality in decision-making institutions and processes. UN Women ECARO advocated to member states to consider various forms of temporary special measures that have proved effective, including gender quotas for elected and appointed positions, and provided technical support to UNCTs on advancing TSMs and gender responsive legal frameworks. UN Women will continue to provide technical support to policy makers and experts in governments in the region to further strengthen their

legislation and enhance capacity, knowledge and skills on how to implement the data and evidence-driven gender responsive policies and interventions Based on the progress made to date, the original strategy and theory of change for this outcome remain applicable . If, as expected the strategy is successful, more gender-responsive normative policies and frameworks will be in place including strengthened capacities to produce timely and high quality gender data in addition to institutionalized gender responsive budgeting across the region.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ECA\_D\_1.2

### **Women and girls fully and equally participate in leadership and decision-making processes and benefit from gender-responsive governance.**

The outcome was not fully achieved, but important progress has been made. Women's Political Participation (WPP): Some progress has been made towards women and girls fully and equally participating in leadership and decision-making processes and benefiting from gender-responsive governance. Women in the region are more prepared for greater leadership roles and to run for election through the UN Women Campaign and Leadership Curriculum implementation in Türkiye and Kazakhstan . To support this, the RO provided high-level advocacy and technical support in Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and in regional fora where Member States, parliamentarians, civil society, practitioners, and academia convened to advance implementation of the normative framework on women's political participation . ECARO also collaborated with regional partners, including the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), on contributions to knowledge products, regional events, and assistance for national partners to push for implementation of commitments on women's leadership and gender responsive governance. More remains to be done to ensure that women can fully participate in decision making processes in ECA. Structural barriers, including threats and violence against women in politics hamper equal representation and participation of women in decision making. The proportion of women still falls well below parity. Harmful social norms still tightly restrict women's engagement in the public sphere and persist in society. Women from marginalized groups and young people still need to be fully included in decision-making processes. Women Peace and Security (WPS): Significant progress has made in the region. Georgia and Kyrgyzstan adopted National Action Plans (NAPS) on 1325, Ukraine updated its NAP, and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan drafted NAPs for the first time. ECARO provided support to offices and partners to share experiences and best practices. Over 450 women peacebuilders, mediators, activists, women leaders, women's organizations, and diverse stakeholders enhanced their awareness of the WPS-HA agenda dialogues on WPS at the regional and global levels. The dialogues contributed to some new commitments, including through the COMPACT on Women Peace and Security in Humanitarian Action (WPD-HA). Advocates seeking to advance implementation of the WPS agenda have access to 16 knowledge products. UN Peace and Development Advisors have access to regional conflict and gender tools. UN Women contributed to these results through facilitation of dialogues and meetings and bringing its expertise and experience as well as providing a multi-stakeholders platform allowing a meaningful contribution by all respective partners. Based on the progress made to date, the theory of change (ToC) remains valid and applicable. ECA will intensify its efforts due to the ongoing war and multiple crisis to advance both WPS and WPP in the region.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ECA\_D\_1.3

### **Women and girls live a life free from all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful social norms.**

The outcome was not achieved, as violence against women and girls remains the most pervasive human

rights violation in the region, though some progress was made. Two additional countries in the ECA region ratified the Istanbul Convention . Moldova ratified the Convention on 31st January 2022, and the treaty went into effect on the 1st of May, while Ukraine ratified it on the 18 th of July &ndash; 11 years after signing the treaty &ndash; and it went into effect on the 1st of November 2022. Thus, as of December 2022, 37 European countries have ratified the Convention, eight of which are within the ECA region – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. Moreover, in 2022, while EU accession to the Istanbul Convention remained blocked, the von der Leyen Commission proposed new legislation to address VAW at the EU level and included EU accession to the Convention as a priority for 2022. Eight ECA countries have not ratified the Convention yet: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovak Republic, while T&uuml;rkiye withdrew in July 2021.

Several threats to the safety of women and girls emerged and increased during the reporting period. First, the war in Ukraine heightened the risk of conflict-related violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence and other forms of torture. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the reliability and modality of protection measures against VAW and essential services for survivors. Despite the persistence of violence and discrimination against women and girls, countries in the region made several notable achievements toward the protection of women and girls and prevention of violence: The Government of Albania launched changes to the Criminal Code to double sentences for serious crimes and remove shortened judgments, including for crimes related to domestic violence and violence against children. The Kosovo Government approved the new Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women for 2022–2026 on 26 January 2022. Moreover, policymakers finalized and submitted the draft new Law on Protection from Domestic Violence to the Presidency of Kosovo Parliament on 14 October 2022. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to undertake a series of actions to collect harmonized and gender-aware data on femicide and to strengthen the femicide watch mandate of the Committee for Monitoring and Reporting on the Istanbul Convention and Femicide in BiH &ndash; the first of such committees in the Western Balkans &ndash; thereby adopting the recommendations provided by former UN Special Representative on Violence Against Women with the support of UN Women (UNSRVAW). Key regional and governmental actors prioritize femicide prevention and response as a political issue more in the ECA region thanks to the work of UN Women and its partners . Governments and authorities in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia expressed their commitment to eradicating femicide and establishing a femicide watch. The Serbian government also defined femicide as the most extreme manifestation of VAW and established a control mechanism for monitoring and analyzing femicide cases (Femicide Watch) in the Strategy for combating Gender Based Violence. These changes resulted from advocacy using research generated from a framework for understanding the characteristics, causes and patterns of femicide. Governments and civil society in the region accessed transparent and up-to-date information on the femicide epidemic through the first interactive femicide map in the region. Produced by UN Women and partner CSO Femplatz, the map captured more than 100 femicides committed in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia since 2020. The map tracks data on femicide and is a model of a public and transparent tool that may be developed through prospective femicide watches in the region ( more info available here ) . After regional stakeholders attended a presentation of the new UN statistical framework for measuring femicide, they selected Albania and Serbia as pilot countries for the framework&rsquo;s rollout in 2023. The UN Statistical Commission adopted the framework in early 2022, and regional stakeholders learned about the framework in September through a webinar organized by UN Women. The 2022 UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development included a greater focus on femicide through a side event &ldquo;One femicide watch in every country to end the shadow pandemic,&rdquo; co-sponsored by the Government of Spain – the first European Union member state to set up a femicide watch – and the current UNSRVAW. Multi-agency cooperation between healthcare providers and women&rsquo;s specialist service providers in the Western Balkans improved notably . In three cities in Serbia, there was a 40% increase in doctor referrals for women survivors of violence to women&rsquo;s CSOs providing specialist services . This increase occurred following meetings with primary healthcare workers to promote referral pathways. In BiH and Serbia, CSOs collaborated with local entities to develop and strengthen protocols and guidelines on referring and treating cases of VAW. These results were achieved through 69 meetings and seven training workshops that reached 735 key

stakeholders (healthcare workers, healthcare decisionmakers, ministry representatives, etc.) across seven Western Balkan countries/territories with information on referral pathways, multi-agency cooperation, and effective standards of care for victims of VAW. Based on the progress made to date, the original strategy and theory of change for this outcome remain still applicable. If, as expected, this strategy is successful, more women at risk of violence and subject to discrimination and harmful social norms will be legally protected with strengthened legislation and have access to and benefit services when needed.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ECA\_D\_1.4

### **The UN System demonstrates greater accountability to advance progress on GEWE across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.**

The outcome has been fully achieved as ECARO had significant results in 2022 through its coordination mandate in accelerating UN system wide progress towards gender equality across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. From a humanitarian perspective, there is increased awareness about the needs and priorities of refugee women and girls fleeing the war in Ukraine as a result of the establishment of a stand-alone gender mechanism under the UNHCR-led regional refugee response and availability of gender analysis and expertise. The needs of women and girls were discussed and prioritized within the humanitarian response only two weeks after Russia's invasion of Ukraine during a targeted discussion with the regional UN system initiated and led by UN Women in collaboration with the regional Issue-based Coalition on Large Movements of People, Displacement and Resilience (IBC- LMPDR) chaired by IOM, UNDP and UNHCR. The meeting helped to generate support for the establishment of a Regional Gender Task Force (RGTF) chaired by UN Women and CARE International under the Regional Refugee Coordination Forum. Comprised of more than 70 members from nearly 40 organisations including UN agencies, international NGOs and CSO networks, the RGTF provided technical support, guidance, and capacity development knowledge to other refugee/humanitarian actors in other countries. The evidence-based analysis of gender in the regional response to the war produced by the RFTF, increased understanding of gender and other social aspects and trends across the region. Its main findings have informed further actions to improve gender responsiveness of the humanitarian assistance and it is being used to advocate for increased funding for women-led organizations who are at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance and further recovery in refugee host countries. Through the pooled expertise of 15 UN entities at the regional and country level, the Regional Issue-based Coalition on Gender Equality (co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA) achieved the following results: UN agencies, international civil society organizations and national actors increased awareness about the gendered implications of the war in Ukraine and successful advocacy for a stand-alone gender mechanism under the regional refugee response coordination forum. Increased regionalization of commitments through the convening of a multi-stakeholder platform to advance progress on Generation Equality (Action Coalition Five on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality. Joint advocacy on key policies and interventions for increasing women's access and rights to resources, services and opportunities and eliminating barriers, particularly for rural women and girls through collaboration with the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems to co-organize the Third Food Systems Talk within the framework of International Day of Rural Women. A strong gender focus throughout the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development through the organization of two side events focused on SDG 5 on The Gendered Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees and Migrants and Building Back Better and Dismantling discriminatory social norms to progress on the SDGs. Additionally, the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) became an important tool for UN Country Teams (UNCTs) for tracking financial allocations to advance their national GEWE agendas. Over 100 UN staff members from Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Armenia and Serbia strengthened their capacity on objective coding of GEM with practical examples from their respective Joint Work Plans through tailor made trainings offered by UN Women in 2022. Based on the progress made to date, the original strategy and theory of change for this outcome remain applicable.

**Assuring an accountable organization through principled performance.**

The ECA region led by ECARO is leading corporate compliance within UN Women as demonstrated through the Q4 QBR presented to the UN Women TMG on 24 January 2023 attached below. Notably ECA had: The highest preliminary delivery at 98% 100% compliance with ERM (OneApp) The highest Security compliance at 98% The highest Donor reporting at 96% The highest InfoSec compliance (score 77) The highest Month End compliance at 80 to 90% for Q4 Zero outstanding partner audit findings, the only region to do so 75% Business (CM) transformation compliance, ranking second Most requests received than any other region through GST despite our size and yet we rank second in average days to resolve requests (2.4 days). The first-place region only has 30% of the requests ECA received. Zero post facto cases, the only region including HQ to do so.

**Advancing partnerships & resourcing; Effectively influencing for impact & scale.**

In 2022, countries developed and finalized 35 agreements with donors that led to over 20 million dollars mobilized for gender equality programming in the region, with unwavering support from ECARO. Notably, Ukraine signed a new agreement with Sweden for 4.8 million supporting the Strategic Note and similarly BiH received 1.5 million from Sweden focusing on women resilience in rural areas. Moreover, a new agreement was signed with USA for over 1.9 million for the regional refugee response. New partnerships were established with KOICA and agreements were signed with Poland, MFA Austria and Netherlands for targeted programming activities in Ukraine and Moldova. On nurturing existing partnerships, UN Women continued cooperation with European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and jointly partnered on Women Entrepreneurship Expo regionally and at the country level facilitate new business connections for women entrepreneurs. The ongoing partnership with Regional Cooperation Council has been further deepened and a joint side event for CSW66 was co-organized on climate and gender whilst a joint action plan has been developed focused on key priorities such as digitalization and the green agenda. ECARO also established a new partnership with UNECE and organized a donor's roundtable to mobilize resource for a joint programme on gender responsive standards that will lead to joint activities in the region. 1.5 million for GEF implementation in Kosovo was successfully secured by ECARO after organizing the Regional GEF (Gender Equality Facility) event to share knowledge, experiences & lessons learned about gender mainstreaming into the EU accession process for Western Balkans with national Gender Mechanisms (NGMs), relevant line ministries, EUD representatives whilst also providing a learning platform for new EU candidates such as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. All these efforts have been instrumental in building bridges and bringing key partners together to continue protecting and advancing the rights of women and girls in the region.

**Advancing business transformation.**

1. ECARO Regional Operations Manager set up a period call between all ROMs and DMA senior management to ensure sharing of initiatives to promote innovation 2. Implementation of a Power BI reporting dashboard for month end compliance to flag key considerable issues for management update. 3. Development and implementation of a contract tracking module 4. A dashboard for sharing and tracking use of regional SSA retainer contracts 5. Implementation of back to office booking App Furthermore, ECARO has proactively volunteered to support in the development of new or updated policies and procedures in HQ,

bringing in the COs for their inputs whenever possible to ensure that 1) the policies are relevant to field requirements and 2) get buy-in from the end users. Lastly, ECA pushed to ensure that they were the first region to receive the Quantum procure-to-pay cycle training and were the first to strongly request the post-COVID re-initiation of CIPS3 training, the first one run in over two years, based on ECARO's demand to ensure high standards are continually followed in ECA.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ECA\_O\_4

##### **Nurturing an empowered workforce and advancing an inclusive and advancing inclusive UN Women culture.**

Following to the conclusion of Time-use Survey, ECA RO identified work-life balance as a priority and make it a reality for each and every staff member. The staff retreat that took place in September 2022 was one of the key steps to discuss and look for solutions in a joined up way. All agreed steps taken very seriously by the senior management which turned into action with the help of a consultant as well as task forces established by staff members. Counselling services were offered to all staff in addition to special coaching sessions for programme managers. New planning modalities introduced in order to balance the work load and ensure equal distribution. ECA pays utmost attention to the well being of staff which improved in a gradual manner. Regarding empowerment of staff, ECARO piloted job-swap within the second half of the year and also availed various missions among COs and RO to facilitate knowledge exchange. These exercises contributed to UNW's inclusive culture that attracted and retained talent in the region.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-ECA\_O\_5

##### **Effective normative, programmatic and coordination products, services and processes.**

All normative, programmatic and coordination products and processes improved in 2022. Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine submitted three new, top quality Strategic Notes (SNs) in a timely manner. To streamline the processes, ECARO combined RO & HQ technical reviews in one meeting and also introduced 'peer review' into the process to cultivate an exchange of experience and learning. All field office annual reports for 2021 were drafted, reviewed and finalized with detailed quality assurance by ECA RO. Moreover, ECARO took a very active role and engaged all levels of the process for one-time course correction of the SP indicators which leads the organization for a more accurate and result focused reporting. Under various programme and projects, many knowledge products were produced which contributed to the Community of Practice exercises both at the regional and corporate levels. UNW's coordination mandate has been strengthened further both at regional and field levels through Issue-based Coalition on Gender Equality, close cooperation with Gender Theme Groups as well UNW's engagement with UNSDCF development processes.