



Implemented by:



The role of women in agriculture and rural development in the WB

Kick-off meeting

Ohrid, 29 – 30 March 2023



Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on the Role of
Women in the Rural Development in the Western Balkans

SUGGESTED

Methodology for assessing women's engagement in agriculture
and their contribution to rural development in the region

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RURAL WOMEN

- **Gender inequality** is an important issue for any society and is especially pronounced in the agricultural sector and rural areas.
 - **Agriculture is perceived as a men-dominated sector**, yet as an engine of growth and development, it should provide greater recognition of the importance of women (Alkire, et al. 2013).
- Rural women are **active agents of economic and social change** and environmental protection who are, in many ways and to various degrees, constrained in their roles as farmers, producers, investors, caregivers and consumers (UN Womenwatc Overview)
- The backbone of our agriculture sector, in spite of the numerous barriers they face in accessing arable lands, soft loans and most importantly the burden of unpaid care work.



RURAL WOMEN

- Rural women play an **important role in the growth of agricultural production**, however,
 - they often face **obstacles and economic constraints** limiting their further inclusion in agriculture.
- **Evident gender inequality** - women often bear the responsibility for meeting the family needs but they frequently **lack resources, information, or even freedom in fulfilling this responsibility.**
- Rural women often face barriers to achieving their full potential,
 - restrictive cultural practices but also
 - in an “institutional” context
 - Labor markets.
- Therefore, eliminating gender inequality and empowering women could **increase the agricultural productive potential**, leading to more empowered rural women who could contribute to the development of the entire community.



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AIM OF THE PROJECT

shed light on women's engagement in agriculture and their contribution to rural development in the region, as well as the opportunities to use their potential in the development of a circular economy, and green social and environmental entrepreneurship.

Possible implications for supporting women to become more visible as agents of change in the sector, will be a critical outcome of the study!

Specifically, the study is interested in answering the following questions:

- What are **women's daily life** and situation on farms in the Western Balkans regarding **economic and social aspects**, including **time management and life-cycle aspects**?
- What are **women's aspirations**, and how is their general **well-being**?
- In which fields do women perceive a **disadvantage** compared to male farm managers (e.g. access to inputs, credits, informal networks, marketing, contract conditions)?
- How is **farm succession done**, and how are women included or excluded in inheritance? Are there other **potentially exclusionary practices**, such as when only one named manager or tenant is a male family member?
- How are women **involved in business decisions**, and under which conditions do they become **innovators on the farm**?
- Are there specific training needs?
- What are the **opportunities for women for farm diversification and off-farm work**, as well as the **development of a circular economy, and green, social, and environmental entrepreneurship**?
- How are **women represented in (leadership in) farmers' associations**?

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OUTCOME

the study is expected to provide insights into possible solutions for more informed decision-making at the policy level

A critical outcome of the study will be to identify ways and provide policy recommendations on a national level for each of the WB countries/territories as well as on a regional Western Balkan level for women empowerment in the midst of green recovery leading to the sustainable development of Western Balkan societies.

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Proposed methodology

for the selection of participants for the interviews, for the focus group discussions and for the surveys, considering representativeness

MIXED-METHOD APPROACH



QUALITATIVE

1. DESK RESEARCH

National Expert

2. INTERVIEWS

SWG

3. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

National Expert

QUANTITATIVE

YOUTH SURVEY

International + SWG

NATIONAL REPORT

CROSS-COUNTRY REPORT



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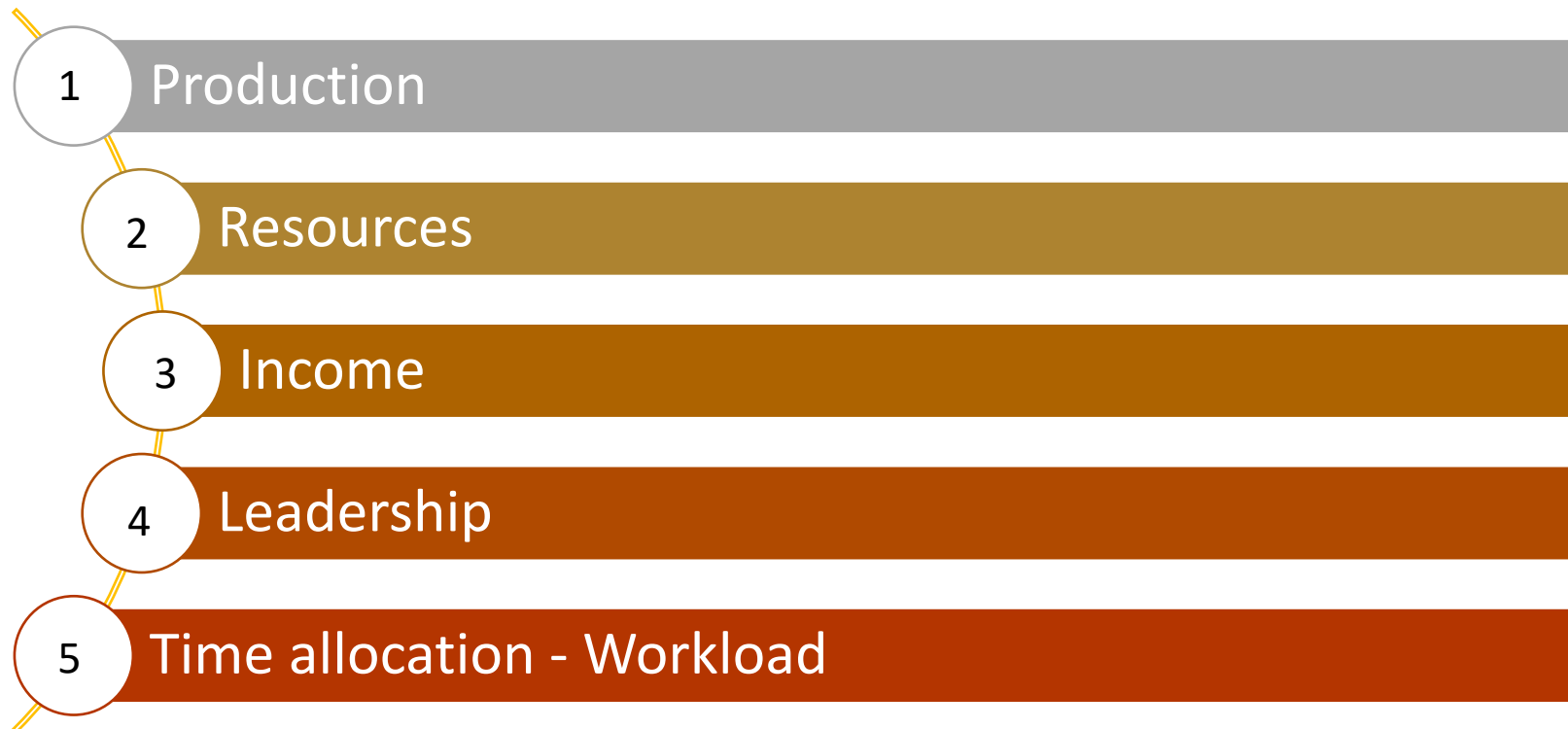


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FIVE INDICATORS OF EMPOWERMENT

- **Standardized measure** jointly developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Food Policy Research Institute, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
- ❖ **Domain-specific indicators of empowerment that allow the identification of the critical points where further policy interventions and efforts for women's empowerment are needed (evidence-based policy making)** (Alkire *et al.*, 2013)
- ❖ To provide structural data and comparable results between the countries
- ❖ Recommendations at national and regional level



Five Indicators of empowerment

- 1. Production** - Input in productive decisions (sole or joint decision-making), green social and environmental entrepreneurship, innovations
- 2. Resources** - ownership of assets & access to productive resources and decisions on credit, education, health, child care...
- 3. Income** - Control over use of income
- 4. Leadership** - Group membership (membership in formal or informal economic or social groups) leading positions, women leaders – role models in rural areas, social capital..
- 5. Time allocation** – **Workload**: allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks (paid and unpaid work)

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Five domains elaboration (desk research)

DESK RESEARCH

Descriptive analyses of five domains of women's empowerment



National Experts responsible for the desk research for each WB country/territory

Include:

- Desk research of available literature and official statistical data to provide an overview of each of the five domains with emphasis on the position of women in each domain.
- ❖ **Secondary statistical data** and a review of different **strategic documents** at the national level to assess the current situation of the available gender-disaggregated data necessary as a basis for further policy making and decision-making to target rural women's needs
 - References: Official data (SSO, Ag. Census, Project docs..)
- The national reports will state if there are data constraints and data gaps.
- **Detailed policy review**
 - ✓ relevant policies and policy trends that could influence the situation of rural woman and their engagement in the agri-food sector in the WB countries and territories.
- ✓ All findings will be discussed in the Western Balkans' socio-demographic and rural/agricultural context.

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Institutional and legal framework (desk research + interviews)

Overview of the institutional setting for supporting rural youth

EXPERT INTERVIEWS



Implemented by:



- The national experts will select relevant interview partners

SWG regional offices

This task includes conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of relevant dynamics and current issues rural youth face

Expert interviews will be conducted with **five**, relevant representatives of different stakeholders per country/territory that work, or are involved in issues affecting women from rural areas, including:

1. Representative of a **policy-making institution** (eg. Ministry of Agriculture)
2. Ministry of **Labour/Social policy**;
3. Projects focusing on rural women
4. Representative of a **civil society sector**
5. A **researcher from academia**, who has the youth or rural youth as a research field;
6. **NGO** working on rural women's issues
7. Female representative, **member of a farmer association**, agricultural **cooperative**, or similar farmer's organization

EXPERT INTERVIEWS



Guiding question for the semi-structured interviews

1. In your **personal opinion**, what are the **most pressing issues for rural women**, and **how can they be best addressed**? How do you perceive the **current situation, major challenges, and opportunities** for rural women?
2. Can you please give us your **opinion on the effectiveness of the relevant institutions** that implement or have jurisdiction over rural women's issues (e.g. Ministries, Agencies, etc.), and the **programs/policies** that target rural women?
3. Are there **gender-responsive criteria** for specific measures? If you are aware, please indicate them.
4. What are the opportunities for women for **farm diversification** and **off-farm work**, as well as the development of a circular economy, and green, social, and environmental entrepreneurship?
5. Can you **identify the crucial institution(s) or policies that are missing**? How would you evaluate their **suitability and accessibility for rural women**?



EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Guiding question for the semi-structured interviews

6. Are you aware of **different strategic documents** that include different aspects of youth and rural women? If yes, please describe **how are rural youth issues incorporated within this document**; which (if any) **operational and monitoring plans** exist.
7. Do you have ongoing or already implemented **donor-funded projects** targeting rural women? Can you explain what the specific aims are and if you think that the projects are **successful/not successful** and why? Do these projects perceive the different challenges met by rural women?
8. What are the **organizations, associations, cooperatives or community groups functioning on a local level** which empower rural women? Can you give examples of how they function and how they support rural women?
9. Can you specify what **activities, policies/subsidies** would empower women in rural areas?
10. What are the **future plans** of your institution/organization for activities for improving rural women's well-being?



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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS METHOD

National Experts responsible for the focus group for each WB country/territory

SWG regional offices

This task includes conducting a focus group discussion with the target group of rural youth to gain a deeper understanding of relevant dynamics and current issues rural youth face.

- Focus group / 7 -10 participants per focus group
 - 7 countries/territories = 98 – 140 total participants.
 - ✓ Two groups per country/territory



- Group 1: Women which are members of an association/cooperative/network
- Group 2: Women which are not members of any association/cooperative/network



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS

Opening/open question: Which topics are concerning you the most, being a woman living in a rural area? (a participants are asked to write down key topics on provided cards.

- The cards will be collected by the note taker and sorted into categories.)



1. Production

Discuss the available opportunities for women in agriculture and rural development.

- What are the **most concerning issues** for women engaged in agriculture?
- What are the **preferences of women to be involved in agriculture? Is it attractive for them?**
- Discuss the **likelihood of a female farm household member taking over the farm business.** How is this linked to how and when farm succession is done? Is it common for a woman to take over?
- **How difficult is it to be a women farm manager** (e.g. renting/buying a farm and farmland, taking over the farm from parents/relatives)?
- To what extent do women have **input in production decisions?**
- Discuss what type of agriculture **opportunities are missing** for women.
- Discuss the current **employment preferences** of women (what are the current employment opportunities, why the described trend appeared, how's the unemployment situation, do people find a job after their education, etc.).
- What are the **opportunities for women for farm diversification and off-farm work**, as well as the development of a circular economy, and green, social, and environmental entrepreneurship?
- What are the **factors that facilitate entrepreneurship** and what **hinders entrepreneurship** in the context of agriculture and rural areas? How are women involved in business decisions, and under which conditions do they become innovators on the farm?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS



2. Resources

- What are the **key factors that hinder women to run an agricultural business**?
- Discuss **access to land** for women farmers. How is **farm succession done**, and how are women included or excluded in inheritance?
- What are **credit constraints or opportunities** for women farmers or women rural entrepreneurs?
- What are the **management capabilities** of women in **farming or rural entrepreneurship**? Which **managerial skills** are **missing**? What are other specific **training needs**?
- Do women have **equal access to advisory services**?
- In which fields do women perceive a disadvantage compared to male farm managers (e.g. access to inputs, credits, informal networks, marketing, contract conditions)?
- What about the **educational opportunities** for women in rural areas? Describe if they have equal opportunities. What about access to **health services** for women in rural areas? Describe if they have equal opportunities.
- Discuss how childcare and elderly care influence women's professional development.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS



3. Income

- To what extent do women have input in **income generation from agriculture**?
- To what extent do women have input in **income generation from other rural diversification activities**?
- Access to subsidies and other financial support? Are women aware of support schemes?
- Are there any additional **gender-responsive measures** for supporting women in agriculture?
- Do women contribute with any additional sources of income for the household?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS



4. Leadership

- How are **women represented in (leadership in) farmers' associations?**
 - Discuss how membership in farmers association/cooperatives/networks contribute to empowering women in rural areas.
- Discuss **key factors** that affect women **to be or not to be** a member of associations / cooperatives/network.
- What **kind of resources are needed** to encourage to get involved in leadership groups (association/cooperative/network)?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS



5. Time allocation

- Do you think that there is **equal distribution of working hours** between men and women?
- Is there an equal distribution between **paid/unpaid work for women vs. paid/unpaid work for men?**
 - paid work (on-farm, of-farm, product sale) / unpaid work (housework, care for children and elderly)
- What are women's needs (services) necessary to support them in providing opportunities for the women to equally participate the labour market as men or increase paid work

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YOUTH SURVEY



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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