

Annex 8

Gender Assessment and Action Plan

For the GCF-FAO Project “Enhancing the resilience of Serbian forests to ensure energy security of the most vulnerable while contributing to their livelihoods and carbon sequestration (FOREST Invest)”

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List of abbreviations

UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
NFI	National Forest Inventory
BAU	Business as Usual (scenario)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
GCF	Green Climate Fund
LULUCF	Land-use change and forestry
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
UN	United Nations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
GAP	Gender Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EU	European Union
COVID 19	coronavirus disease caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2 (WHO)
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
NARS	National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia
CBGE	Coordination Body for Gender Equality
AP	Autonomous Province
SCTM	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
NWFP	Non-Wood Forest products
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
NP	National Park
PFOA	Private Forest Organisations
MOAFWM	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
MEP	Ministry of Environmental Protection
MME	Ministry of Mining and Energy
MESTD	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
MoE	Ministry of Economy
GBV	Gender Based Violence

Introduction

Compared to the reference period used in the two available national communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1961-1990, climate variables in Serbia have changed. Temperatures – both minimum and maximum – are increasing steadily while rainfall patterns appear more erratic and generally concentrated in autumn and spring. Projections to 2050 indicate that changes will worsen and that both temperatures and precipitation will further become an issue to address especially in those sectors, such as agriculture, that are still largely dependent on climate.¹ This fact is raising the importance of mitigating measures country should take into consideration, especially those related to implementation of low carbon development strategies.

Serbia's low carbon development strategy promotes a transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient economy where decarbonization relies largely on increasing CO₂ absorption by forests (+17% - 2030). Nonetheless, climate change is affecting Serbian forests, and the adaptation deficit is high across stakeholders. Forests are facing unprecedented threats due to climate change, and CO₂ removals are decreasing due to forest degradation (-19.4% in 2015 compared to 2010) and, in a business-as-usual scenario (BAU) might reach -26.1% in 2050 compared to 2010.²

According to National Forest Inventory (NFI) 2008 results, forests in Serbia cover around 30% of the country's total area (Central Serbia 37 % forest cover; Vojvodina 6% of forest cover)³. Even though the forest cover was increased within the last 20 years in Serbia, forest degradation, along with resulting habitat loss and fragmentation, is one of the key environmental problems faced by Serbia at present. Forest degradation on a large scale has resulted in the loss of forest carbon, biodiversity and other key ecosystem goods and services, and has substantially reduced the potential of Serbian forests to act as carbon sinks.⁴ Between the years 2001 and 2018, 63,280.94 ha of forest were lost in the national territory of Serbia. The tree cover loss in percentage would represent a 1.83% of the whole area⁵.

Following the government request to Food and agriculture organisation (FAO) and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)⁶ *targets of Serbia*, as well as the *GCF Country Programme*, the project is under preparation, intending to address national forest's priorities and encourage private sector engagement in decarbonization, as envisaged by the Republic of Serbia. It is titled: ***Enhancing the resilience of Serbian forests to ensure energy security of the most vulnerable while contributing to their livelihoods and carbon sequestration.***

The objective of the project is to support the Republic of Serbia in **enabling the forest sector to contribute to the country's climate change adaptation and low carbon strategy** by:

- Reducing the vulnerability of vulnerable communities by increasing their energy security,
- Stabilizing and increasing carbon removals,
- Upgrading capacities of key institutions and private sector operators to manage the decarbonization process,
- Incentivizing private sector companies to engage in climate de-risking and decarbonization process.

¹ Monzini, Jacopo (2021): Background information for the FAO TCP/SRB/ 3801/C1

² Ibid

³ Unpublished FAO 2019. Socio-economic perspectives of sustainable forest management & local development in Serbia.

⁴ Project Document, GEF 6 Project: Contribution to Sustainable Forest Management to a Low Emission and Resilient Development

⁵ https://earthenginepartners.appspot.com/science-2013-global-forest/download_v1.6.html

⁶ FAO (2019) Regional analysis of the Nationally Determined Contributions of the countries in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia – Gaps and opportunities in the agriculture sectors. 132 pp

The project will address bottlenecks to **climate change adaptation and mitigation** through:

Component 1 - Enhancing forest management and forest governance while reducing drivers of degradation;

Component 2 - Enhancing LULUCF contribution to climate change mitigation and DRR;

Component 3 - Supporting private sector engagement in climate derisking and in decarbonization.

The co-benefits of the project will include:

1. the increased participation of the private sector in sustainable and climate adaptive forest management
2. the greening of the wood-based biomass value chains.

The combined impact of these actions will **enable Serbia to reduce the vulnerability of its forestry sector and communities while increasing total CO2 removals**.

Given the distribution of forests in Serbia, **the project will work at the national level** in order to benefit the entire population of the Republic of Serbia. The project will ensure the participation of key sectoral actors from national and local institutions as well as from civil society organizations and academia.

The success of the project will, to a large extent, depend on the **practical integration of gender equality mainstreaming into forest governance and climate finance**. The value of its contribution will be increased, as the overall implementation plan and actions foreseen are sensitive to the diverse needs of the communities with regard to gender, ethnicity and economic status, so the project will strive to **promote gender balance** from the basics - stakeholder participation in meetings and other platforms relevant to decision-making through institutional structures improving for **achieving gender-responsive forest governance and in-depth technical knowledge extension, budget planning and actions** conducted.

To enable project to have a gender-sensitive approach and provide benefit to the wider community of the focused area, as the standard requirement of the GCF, this gender analysis provides recommendations and action plan for the for the funding application.

Aims and targets of the proposed project

By enhancing the resilience of Serbian forests and rural communities while enhancing the carbon storage potential of the country to support and boost the decarbonization process through adaptation and mitigation investments, the project belongs to the result areas of **mitigation and adaptation**.

Transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient economy in Serbia is seen through a low carbon **development strategy which promotes primarily decarbonization through increasing the CO2 absorption by forests, but that requires an adaptive approach to ensure ecosystem services to rural and vulnerable communities**.

Therefore, the project aims at

- A. Increasing the resilience of 729,064 individuals (371,823 women),
- B. reducing national net emissions by increasing carbon removals from the forestry sector (7.6 MtCO₂ (27Y)).

Unfortunately, **Serbian forests are already affected by climate change** themselves and being degraded by fuelwood extraction. **Forests are degrading, making Serbian capacity to deal with required adaptation deficient**. Drought in Serbia has become more frequent, decreasing forest vitality and exposing them more often to forest fires. **Rural livelihoods have become increasingly uncertain**, pushing local communities to adopt **overexploitation patterns to provide food and energy**. For that reason, project targets are seen as possible to reach only by supporting the forestry sector by:

- (a) increasing forest cover by 7,000 ha;
- (b) enhancing about 52,000, ha of public and private degraded coppice stands into high forest;
- (c) ensuring sustainable forest management and climate adaptive silviculture on 500,000 ha of forests;
- (d) creating an offsetting and insetting mechanisms that will allow the private sector to dispose of CO₂ credits to complete their decarbonization.
- e) engaging with private sector companies in climate de-risking and decarbonization processes.

These actions fall under the 3 main categories of adaptation measures of the Serbian Low Carbon Development Strategy among other:

- 1) Afforestation using location mapping and tree species adapted to climate change;
- 2) Introducing “Climate-Smart Forestry” approaches; and
- 3) Changing forest management practices following a Close-to-Nature-Forest-Management/Close-to-Nature-Forestry approach

Those will require full engagement of various local rural development stakeholders and governmental institutions, civil society, and academia. Also, complete knowledge/human and natural capital of local people/indigenous knowledge should be wisely employed in combination with the cutting-edge technologies, to conduct long term action for the purpose of supporting development of sustainable communities and healthy ecosystems capable to interact for the benefit of each other.

Gender-related international frames of the proposed project

The Republic of Serbia is investing a lot of energy to come along with the contemporary trends of sustainable development, which also include maximizing utilization of the available human resources for the benefit of its communities. Serbia's gender equality policies are guided by international commitments that the state has undertaken for the ratification of key international conventions, such as the *Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (the Istanbul Convention). Also, Serbia ensures active participation in international platforms, such as the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, and UN resolutions, including the *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*. Serbia regularly submits its reports under these conventions.

Serbia's development policies have also been aligned with the Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030⁷ and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, Agenda 2030 represents a framework for its sustainable development throughout different sectors, including gender and forest protection. Gender equity is addressed under the SDG 5, but it is in practice a cross-cutting issue for all of the 17 SDGs. Regarding the sustainable forest conservation and management part of these goals, important in particular are:

- **Sustainable production and consumption** (SDG 12), which targets also empowerment of the local populations, including women, to provide rational natural resources exploitation and their longevity
- **Climate action** (SDG 13): which considers differences in women and local communities, and other groups affected by climate change, as much as the knowledge and experiences they possess, that can help find adapted solutions to climate change.
- **Conserving forests and biodiversity** (SDG 15): which is talking about the limiting the industrialization of agriculture and forestry in order to protect forests, biodiversity and preserve local communities' ways of subsistence.

Recommendations of international mechanisms indicate the direction that reforms in Serbia should take to improve gender equality in different areas. The Concluding observations and recommendations of the CEDAW Committee in 2019, "recognize specific forms of discrimination of women in rural areas and recommend priority actions for the improvement of the situation of rural women in various aspects, from access to ownership, employment, economic and social security, protection from violence, to increased representation in decision-making bodies, and similar"⁸.

CEDAW Committee considers that gender equality has not been achieved sufficiently in the case of women in rural areas of Serbia since:

- (a) Serbia missed to adopt measures, including temporary special measures, to ensure that rural women, including women employed in the informal sectors of the economy, have access to education, healthcare, housing, formal employment, social security and retirement schemes, life-long training opportunities, ownership and use of land on an equal basis with men, and that their specific needs are met;
- (b) Serbia didn't ensure the equal participation of rural women in decision-making, including in relation to agricultural holdings, and involve them in the design, development,

⁷ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 104/2009. ¹⁰ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 22/2009. ¹¹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 4/2016.

⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2019

implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all relevant plans and strategies, such as those relating to health, education, employment, retirement and social security;

- (c) Serbia missed to strengthen data collection on rural women, disaggregated by age, gender and geographical area, to assess their situation and the progress made overtime.⁹

The NGO “Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development” in their 2019 “shadow report”¹⁰ emphasised that Serbia is committed to all SDGs but has not adopted specific national Sustainable Development Goals. The first Voluntary National Review was submitted to the High Political Forum in 2019 (Government of the Republic of Serbia). The report has emphasised that SDGs are important for reaching gender equality, human rights and environmental protection which is obviously not fully understood and applied in Serbia.

Another important international framework followed is provided through the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), which Serbia ratified in 2002. The four strategic objectives of the CBD Gender Plan of Action are¹¹:

- i. Integration of gender perspectives
- ii. Promoting gender equality
- iii. Demonstrate the benefits of integrating gender
- iv. Increase the effectiveness of implementation efforts

Actions based on these objectives are related to policy, organizational, delivery, and constituency. Some *ad-hoc* activities in respect to biodiversity conservation related to gender is noticed in almost every project, yet usually with no relevant follow-ups. Project activities of the kind are mostly related to trainings or events, while recording of participating women is the only evidence of providing equal opportunities for benefiting through knowledge transfers.

GCF guidelines for the promotion of gender equality

At the Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh (COP22), Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reiterated their commitment to mainstreaming gender in climate action and the UNFCCC process, providing substantial instructions in a stand-alone decision on gender. Parties gave specific guidance, including to the GCF as an operating entity of the Convention’s Financial Mechanism, to enhance reporting on how gender considerations are integrated in all aspects of activities.¹²

Gender mainstreaming is central to the GCF’s objectives and guiding principles, including through engaging women and men of all ages as stakeholders in the design, development and implementation of strategies and activities to be financed. The GCF Governing Instrument states that: “The Fund will strive to maximize the impact of its funding for adaptation and mitigation... promoting environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits and taking a gender-sensitive approach.”¹³

Thus, gender equality considerations should be mainstreamed into the entire project cycle to enhance the efficacy of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions and ensure that gender co-benefits are obtained. This applies to all projects, not just those intended from the outset to centre

⁹ https://womenngo.org.rs/images/CEDAW/CEDAW_Concluding_observations.pdf

¹⁰ Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development: Serbia-shadow-report, <https://www.women2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Serbia-shadow-report.pdf>

¹¹ Convention on Biological Diversity: 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action

¹² GCF and UN Women (2017): Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects - A practical manual to support the integration of gender equality in climate change interventions and climate finance, Korea

¹³ Ibid

on women or to have a gender focus. Gender mainstreaming is fundamental to any project intervention and does not necessarily signify additional costs; in fact, mainstreaming gender makes climate interventions more effective and efficient.¹⁴

According to the GCF's Gender Policy, projects submitted to the Fund are required to be aligned with national policies and priorities on gender and fit with the Fund's gender policy". This includes a gender assessment and gender action plan (GAP), which should provide information on project responses to the needs of women and men in view of the addressed problematics.¹⁵

Methodology

Gender analysis was conducted during the project preparation phase to identify potentials for promoting gender equity, advancing women's participation in project activities and to assess and mitigate potential risks.

In order to ensure relevance, quality and proper targeting, the gender analysis has been elaborated using a combination of a desk review of relevant national policies, legal and regulatory frameworks and studies conducted in the sector (secondary data) and direct consultations with relevant stakeholders, including government staff in charge of gender issues, representatives of NGOs and women from rural communities involved in forestry-related activities.

The gender assessment was followed by the development of a concrete gender action plan (GAP), intended to address gender gaps and maximize opportunities and benefits of women's engagement with boosting the decarbonization process, through enhancing the resilience of Serbian forests and the carbon storage potential of the country. To ensure ownership as well as proper identification of issues and targeted actions, development and finalization of the gender analysis and development of GAP was conducted through regular consultations between the project team and various stakeholders. The process was further strengthened through direct consultations with NGOs in pilot regions communities in Banat (Kikinda) and Eastern Serbia (Dimitrovgrad) as typical regions for Voivodina plains and mountain regions of Central Serbia which were used to inform the preparation of the GAP. Questionnaires were used to assess position and needs of the private forest women and men holders. Further in-depth analysis is planned during the inception phase using the same approach, with the intention to further enrich the GAP per territory specific gender analysis data and define adequate measures. The Gender expert, with support from the FAO PMU will oversee this engagement.

Stakeholders consulted during the project identification and formulation:

During the preparation of this assessment and the subsequent gender action plan (GAP), the team engaged with a diverse set of stakeholders and their focal points for issues related to the social and gender dimension of the project. These included: (I) Institutions, (II) Local administrations, (III) Civil Society Organizations and (IV) Academia.

The feedback received was integrated into the actions and indicators included in the GAP, such as, for example, ensuring a gendered approach to updating syllabi, as well as the provision of data, contacts and documents.

¹⁴ GCF and UN Women (2017): Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects - A practical manual to support the integration of gender equality in climate change interventions and climate finance, Korea

¹⁵ Ibid

Organization	Type of Organization	
	Organization	International
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in Southeastern Europe (SWG RRD)	Organization	International
Faculty of Forestry	Academia	National
IUCN Serbia/NBS forest project	NGO	National
Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water - Rural Development/IPARD measure 7	Institutions	National
Natura Balkanika/GIZ project team on gender	Association	National
Singidunum University/Env.and Sust.Development Studies	Academia	National
Pokret gorana, local branches	Association	National
Municipality Dimitrovgrad	Institutions	National
Municipality Kikinda	Institutions	National
Municipality Zrenjanin	Institutions	National
Hunting association Zrenjanin	Association	International
Forest institute Belgrade	Institutions	National
National Alliance for Local Economic Development	NGO	National

The following gender analysis should help understand relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face in Republic of Serbia. It is intended to promote gender – relevant entry points, policies and identify opportunities for enhancing gender equality in respect to enhancing the resilience of forests and the carbon storage potential of Serbia. Gender analysis of Serbian environment should help identify the multiple causes of vulnerability, including gender inequality, as much as to help identify and build on the diverse knowledge and capacities within local rural communities/households that can be used to make them more resilient to climate related shocks and risk while boosting the decarbonization process.

1. GENDER EQUALITY IN SERBIA

Serbia is a landlocked country in Southeast Europe (West Balkans), with a socialist heritage, which is relevant for the forms of gender inequalities and position of women. There is formal equality in rights (equality and prohibition of discrimination are integrated in the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, and there are also Gender Equality Law and the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination).

At first glance in the public sphere, men and women are formally equal. With more than 30% of women in the national parliament and woman in the position of Prime Minister, Serbia has recently scored a very good results in the EU Gender Equality Index¹⁶ (in the domain of power). Education is one of the key emancipation strategies for women and in 2021 (i.e. more female than male graduated students). However, inequalities are visible in many aspects:

- The private sphere, family, parenthood, or unpaid work, which spills over into the field of paid work.
- Segregation in the education system and the labour market, where dominantly female jobs are paid less and discrimination of young women in the labour market, mostly due to expected motherhood. Women are in general less active in the labour market and less employed, regardless of education.
- Prevalence of gender stereotypes visible in the private and public sphere, at the discursive and practical level, and
- Violence against women.

The value of the Gender Equality Index for Serbia in the sphere of time is 48,7 out of 100 (European Union average 65,7). The Country Gender Assessment conducted by FAO during 2020-21, indicate significant gender gaps in rural areas of Serbia across diverse dimensions, including access to assets, economic participation, roles in and gains from agricultural production, the exercise of a range of welfare rights, political participation, access to social services, lifestyles and resilience to climate change and emergencies. It was also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic, has had profound impact on the rural population and the position of women in rural areas, also creating opportunities for innovative approaches and new practices that can improve the economic activity of rural women in the future, and consequently their overall wellbeing.¹⁷

Serbia is confronting several demographic challenges, such as emigration, rural depopulation, and demographic ageing. The current demographic trend in rural areas is within this most recent research estimated as unfavourable, characterized by continuing population decline, a rise in the average age

¹⁶ According to the latest Gender Equality Index 2018, Serbia was still a country of pronounced gender inequalities in all domains. These inequalities were significantly more pronounced than the EU average (55.8 vs. 66.2), and progress that has been made (compared to 2016), was very small (3.4)¹⁶. One of the main axes of inequality noted by the Index refers to gender segregation, which is established during education and continues later in the labour market.

¹⁷ Ibid

of the population, falling fertility and birth rates contributing to negative population growth, and high levels of migration from rural to urban areas and beyond to other countries.¹⁸ Outward migration from rural areas is more prevalent among women than men, and the reasons for this can be found in women's lower ownership of assets, their weaker ties to land and estates, and their unequal participation in the rural economy. Rural women's living conditions are less adequate in comparison with urban women, especially in terms of access to employment in the non-agricultural sector, and access to education, social services and amenities which are important for quality of life, such as cultural and recreational amenities, all of which then act as pull factors towards urban areas¹⁹

Life expectancy at birth is 77.1 years for women and 72.0 years for men. The average age of the population in 2018 was 41.4 years, and it is worth noting that the average age of women was higher than the average age of men (42.7 and 40.0 years, respectively). In the same year, the share of the working age population in the total population was 65.5 percent. The ageing index (the ratio of the population aged 60 years or more to the young population aged.²⁰ Women in rural areas are on average older than women in the city, which is the consequence of migrations from rural to urban areas. In 2019 there was a slightly higher risk of poverty for women compared to men for almost all age groups. Only in the age group 55-64 are women less endangered than men. The risk of poverty rate for women aged 65 and over is 23.2%, and for men in the same group 18.3%.²¹ The population in rural areas is at a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion.²²

1.1. Common beliefs, perceptions, and stereotypes related to gender

According to the Strategy for Gender Equality, patriarchal cultural patterns and norms, widespread gender stereotypes and prejudices are present in Serbia. Anti-gender discourse and misogyny are insufficiently effectively suppressed and represent some of the key challenges in Serbian society. Violence against women, sexism, gender stereotypes and prejudices are widespread in all spheres of public and private life in Serbia. The re-patriarchization of society is caused by power structures based on the logic of capital and the neoliberal state.²³

Gender inequality rooted in patriarchal norms is still highly prevalent among Serbia's population in the following spheres: labour and employment, education, political and social participation; financial status, and income. It is also ingrained in the sphere of private life, manifested in the unequal distribution of unpaid family care and domestic work between women and men. In its worst form, it is a driver of violence against women, both in the public and private spheres, with dire consequences for the safety and wellbeing of women.²⁴

Due to strong gender stereotypes, parenthood is still considered as the role and responsibility of the woman, which is the basic reason leading towards various forms of discrimination in Serbia.²⁵ Those are mostly women who leave jobs, take half-time jobs or are unemployed in order to be able to take care of kids or other family members. Indicatively, 80% of those who leave jobs due to "family reasons" are women, whereas 98% of those who work in households only are women. Also, 79% of single-parent families are of "mother and kids" type. Women own 29,7% of real estate in Serbia²⁶.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

²⁰ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 54/2009, 73/2010, 101/2011, 93/2012, 62/2013, 63/2013, 108/2013, 142/2014, 68/2015, 103/2015, 99/2016, 113/2017, 95/2018, 31/2019, 72/2019 and 149/2020

²¹ Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 year

²² FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

²³ Dokmanović M. (2018): Gender equality in Serbia: achievements, obstacles and perspectives, Institute of social sciences, Belgrade

²⁴ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

²⁵ Women2030, [Serbia-shadow-report.pdf \(women2030.org\)](#)

²⁶ Ibid

Rural women, single female-headed households, women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups due to gender stereotypes and other factors of vulnerability and social exclusion ruling in Serbia. However, in both urban and rural areas, men demonstrate a significantly higher level of patriarchal attitudes than women²⁷. It should be noted that, in the private sphere, both men and women in rural Serbia are predominantly oriented toward patriarchal values. When it comes to values associated with the public sphere, rural women are oriented toward non-patriarchal values (49 %), while men are predominantly indecisive, i.e., somewhere in between patriarchal, and non-patriarchal values. Older inhabitants are more likely to adopt patriarchal values in terms of both public and private patriarchy.²⁸ The acceptance of gender roles within the private sphere is much more widespread, compared to the public one.²⁹ Women express a more critical attitude towards gender roles in the public sphere (education, political, and labour) than in the private one.³⁰

1.2. Status of women in Serbia - commitments, legislation, and policies

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in its basic regulations (Article 15), among other things, guarantees equality of women and men and obliges the state to pursue a policy of equal opportunities, prohibits direct and indirect gender discrimination, guarantees equality before the law, guarantees equality of spouses, equalizes the status of extramarital union and marriage, guarantees the freedom to decide on childbirth as well as special protection (legal, social and health) of mothers, pregnant women, children and single parents.³¹

Laws and bylaws that regulate areas important for gender equality in the Republic of Serbia are numerous in Serbia and can be roughly divided into two groups. In one, there are those who are directly related to gender equality and regulate the competence of institutions in this area at all levels of government. In the second, those that regulate various areas of social life are relevant to gender equality and women's empowerment. The achievement of gender equality is governed by an umbrella law – the Gender Equality Law, while the prohibition of discrimination on any grounds, including sex, gender identity, or any other personal characteristic (which can also include the type of housing) is defined in the Law Prohibiting Discrimination. Gender responsive budgeting is obliged as part of the budget in accordance with the Law on the Budget System (2015).

The legal framework and public policies in the field of gender equality have been adopted, and there is a gender mechanism at all levels, including local self-governments. The new Law on Gender Equality, adopted in 2021 in Article 42, regulates the implementation of equal opportunities policies and measures and the obligation to integrate a gender perspective in the field of environment and environmental protection.

There is also progress in capacity development and gender mainstreaming procedures in public policies, mostly thank to UN Agencies and other international donors. Yet, despite evident progress in harmonizing with the international and European standards of gender equality, and establishing a legal, political, and institutional framework of gender equality, Serbia lags behind reaching *de facto* gender equality. Many sectoral policies are still gender-blind, perpetuating inequalities between women and men.³²

According to Strategy for Gender Equality, the gender perspective is not embedded in the laws and regulations governing support for innovation. Women's innovative entrepreneurship support programs have been sporadic and with smaller individual allocations. Men's majority-owned firms

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Petrović I., Radoman M. (2020): Patriarchy, authoritarianism and nationalism in Serbia - changes in value orientations, Institute for Sociological Research, Belgrade, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339460079>

³⁰ Petrović I., Radoman M. (2020): Patriarchy, authoritarianism and nationalism in Serbia - changes in value orientations, Institute for Sociological Research, Belgrade, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339460079>

³¹ Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 98/2006

³² Dokmanović M. (2018): Gender equality in Serbia: achievements, obstacles and perspectives, Institute of social sciences, Belgrade

received support in one year as much as women's majority-owned firms received over five years. Recently, the Fund, in response to the results of the gender analysis, began to consider the coverage of companies owned by women in its information campaigns. However, this is still far from removing all barriers to greater participation of women, which will represent the challenge for this project.

There is still a lack of sex disaggregated data and gender statistics in majority of sectors relevant for this project, including the sector of environmental protection as much as forestry, green economy, and entrepreneurship in general. In very few cases, some evidence exists about achievements in implementing advanced gender policies. For instance, gender analysis of the Fund for Innovations of the Republic of Serbia shows, that male-owned companies received 9 times bigger amounts of grants than female owned businesses. Yet, in some other sectors, progress is obvious; although monitoring is still lagging behind; we know from the structure of available financial support and rules in place, that gender sensitivity exists. For instance, law on Agriculture and Rural Development regulates the objectives of agricultural and rural development policies and rules related to the special procedure for the implementation and control of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD) programme³³. Within measures supporting agriculture and rural development, especially in the Axis 3 devoted to rural economy diversification, special attention is provided to women need to upgrade primary based rural economy through introduction of tourism and processing etc. Through additional points granted to the evaluation score/ranking of applications, women and youth are provided with the better chance to obtain financial support for their initiatives. The share of women recipients in total funding for rural development is 23.2 percent, which is above their average share among farm holders and managers (19 percent and 15 percent, respectively).³⁴ Although the specific window supporting forestry and adjacent activities from the rural development portfolio (both national and IPARD) is still missing³⁵, the existence of gender-sensitive approach to rural development incentives is making timing for the project very good.

Serbian strategic plans related to gender are finally completed during 2021. The last in a series of state documents dealing with the status of women,³⁶ - the Serbian government adopted on 14th of October 2021, the Gender Equality Strategy for the period from 2021 to 2030. The one aims overcoming of the gender gap and achieving gender equality, as a precondition for development of Serbian society and the improvement of daily lives of women and men, girls and boys in which women and men, girls and boys, as well as persons of different gender identities have equal rights and opportunities for personal development, provide equal contribution to the sustainable development of society and take equal responsibility for the future.³⁷

The general objectives of the National Strategy on Gender Equality in Serbia are:

1. Changed gender patterns and promoted culture of gender equality
2. Increased equality of men and women in different areas through the implementation of equal opportunity measures.
3. Gender mainstreaming applied in the development, implementation, and monitoring of public policies.

Competent authorities and other entities involved are obliged to consistently consider the protection of human rights, gender equality and especially the rights of the poor, the elderly, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, displaced persons and other vulnerable groups.

³³ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 98/2006 and Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 41/09, 10/13 and 101/2016

³⁴ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

³⁵ Dordevic-Milosevic (2019): Socio-economic perspectives of Sustainable forest management & local development in Serbia, Study for GCP/SRB/002/GEF: Contribution of sustainable forest management to a low emission and resilient development in Serbia (FSP), FAO Belgrade

³⁶ Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 year, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 103/2021

³⁷ [2021-2030 Gender Equality Strategy adopted \(srbija.gov.rs\)](https://www.srbija.gov.rs/2021-2030-Gender-Equality-Strategy-adopted)

Despite the efforts invested in promoting gender responsive budgeting, the national budget is not yet fully gender mainstreamed. The advances are even smaller at the local level, where the process of transitioning to the new budgeting system is slow. The Action Plan for the period 2021- 2023 is in the drafting process. On 20 May 2021, the country's parliament adopted two key laws paving the way for real gender equality in the country: The Law on Gender Equality and the changes to Law on elimination of discrimination.

Multi-year policy and programming documents take into consideration gender components and the need for the economic empowerment of women in rural areas. The development of women's and youth entrepreneurship is set as a specific operational objective under the priority action). An important mechanism for gender mainstreaming is provided in addition in the National Rural Development Programme, as well as IPARD, which also recaps the need for the economic empowerment of women in rural areas (especially through designing support measures). Decree on using funds to support the development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas for 2010, provided that associations could get incentives for projects focusing simultaneously on the purchase of raw materials and employment of women from rural areas doing handicraft, in which way incentives were given to seven agricultural holdings led by women and 12 women's associations.³⁸

Furthermore, in 2010, the Decree on the conditions and manner of the use of incentives to support rural development through investment in agricultural holdings for the production of vegetables, industrial plants, and investments for procuring livestock unit for production, women holders of the agricultural holding would get 10 points more each, and 117 applications with women holders of agricultural holdings 15. Women were awarded 10 points more each, and the grant amount on this call was 100% of the value of the project.³⁹ A total of 223 applications were submitted, out of which in 80 cases the holders of agricultural holdings were women; i.e. women's associations. A total of 70 requests were approved, out of which 19 holders of agricultural holdings were women, or women's associations (7+12).

The Decree on the conditions and manner of the use of incentives to support rural development through investment in agricultural holdings for the production of milk and meat, stipulated that women would get additional five points, so three agricultural holdings with women holders were awarded funds.⁴⁰ Finally, the reply also stated that the government invested efforts in employing hard-to-employ individuals, including rural women, in accordance with the National Employment Strategy for the period 2011-2020; that the 2012 Work Plan of the Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia allocated resources to credit women's entrepreneurship and that the Gender Equality Directorate awarded funds to women working in tourism in rural areas. Unfortunately, the measures selected so far never included the forestry sector itself,⁴¹ but have provided opportunity for women owners to diversify their forest economy (processing of forestry products/handicrafts, agroforestry, silvopastoral activities, tourism).

1.3. Institutional setup and gender equality mechanisms

³⁸ A total of 223 applications were submitted, out of which in 80 cases the holders of agricultural holdings were women, i.e. women's associations. A total of 70 requests were approved, out of which 19 holders of agricultural holdings were women or women's associations (7+12)

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ A total of 74 applications were submitted and 36 approved. Out of the total of 14 applications made by women holders of agricultural holdings, three were paid out

⁴¹ Dordevic-Milosevic (2019): Socio-economic perspectives of Sustainable forest management & local development in Serbia, Study for GCP/SRB/002/GEF: Contribution of sustainable forest management to a low emission and resilient development in Serbia (FSP), FAO Belgrade

Gender equality mechanisms have been established in the legislative and executive branches of power, at national, provincial, and local levels, and within the independent bodies, such as the Ombudsperson and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality.⁴²

Within the Government of Serbia, the mandate for agriculture and rural development is assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and following the establishment of a new Government in autumn 2020, the Ministry for Rural Welfare was formed. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management is responsible for public administration affairs including, among others, strategies, and policies for the development of the agricultural sector and food industry and forestry. The Ministry for Rural Welfare has a mandate to monitor welfare in rural areas, and to propose measures and policies for improving the life and work situation of the rural population and preserving rural traditions and cultural life in rural areas.⁴³

The highest level of the gender mechanism relevant for the project exists within the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (NARS). Two of its committees are of importance for gender issues in rural environment - Committee for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and the Committee for Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality, which are both functioning as regular NARS working bodies. These committees check expenditures and monitor the implementation of Governmental policies, the enforcement of laws, and other general acts (under the responsibility of ministries, state agencies and bodies).

The Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE) provides horizontal and vertical coordination of the mechanisms for gender equality. Horizontal coordination includes a network of gender focal points that are assigned duties to advance gender equality and mainstream gender in the work of each ministry. Vertical coordination includes local gender equality mechanisms in towns and municipalities.

The Government recognized in 2020, has also established the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue. The mandate of this Ministry is to implement public administration around human and minority rights, anti-discrimination, and gender equality.

At the level of the Autonomous Province (AP) of Vojvodina, a Committee for Agriculture and a Committee for Gender Equality are active in the AP Vojvodina Assembly, while in the provincial executive branch, the mandate for agriculture and rural development is assigned to the Secretariat for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, and the mandate for gender equality to the Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality. The Ombudsman of AP Vojvodina has a Deputy for gender equality. The independent institutions of Protector of Citizens, or Ombudsperson, and of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, are also vital for gender equality and protection against discrimination and an essential condition for an inclusive society and inclusive development.

According to the Gender Equality Law, local governments are required to establish local gender equality mechanisms. There is the Gender Equality Network, which consists of representatives of local gender equality mechanisms, whose role is to provide support to local governments to improve gender equality (SCTM, 2020)⁴⁴. A key factor recognized for the success of the gender mechanism⁴⁵ is effective coordination among institutions. In Serbia, however, institutional coordination is weak, and not all relevant actors are fully involved in these processes. Public institutions lack a systematic approach to addressing gender equality and inclusion in forestry and climate change. Additionally, it is essential to secure consistent budget funding for institutions and organizations, rather than relying

⁴²FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2017): Women and men in the Republic of Serbia, ISBN 978-86-6161-166-7

⁴⁵ within the EU funded project “Support to Priority Actions for Gender Equality in Serbia, phase I” (GEF II project)

on ad-hoc project-based financing. This project will create an opportunity to expand discussions on gender equality in forestry beyond the existing network to include the business sector, focusing on reducing gender gaps in the field and making it more appealing to young women and men in rural areas.

The project will work to provide an interactive and long-lasting link between The Ministry of Agriculture, forestry and water management, PE “Serbia Shume” and “Vojvodina Shume” and gender focal points, as well as the focal points in local administrations (officers in charge of human rights and gender) for upgrading capacities of these key institutions and private sector operators, but also for continuous further provision of gender data to support further evidence based inclusive policies upgrade on the national and local levels.

March 2021 marked a beginning of the second phase of a three-year EU funded project “Support to Priority Actions for Gender Equality in Serbia, phase II” (GEF II project) that supports the Government of the Republic of Serbia in effective implementation of the EU Gender Equality Acquis, adoption and implementation of the new legal and strategic framework for Gender Equality, Gender Equality mechanisms on national and local levels, and gender mainstreaming in policies and EU funds programming, implementation and monitoring. Furthermore, the project will advance the position of women and will support local communities in fulfilling their commitments on gender equality. The timing is perfect for creating synergy with the project working in practice with local communities as well as introducing novelties into the national frames for supporting gender mainstreaming environmental and forestry sectors. The UN Women Office in Serbia implements this project, in close cooperation with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, the Ministry of European Integration, the EU Delegation in Serbia, and other partner institutions as well as with women’s civil society organizations.

Following the new Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III) adopted by the EU at the end of 2020 and to provide a systemic basis for gender-responsive EU support to Serbia, Gender Country Profile has been developed. The document is providing a comprehensive and structured gender analysis in the six intervention areas identified in the GAP III, including promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women; promoting equal participation and leadership, and Climate change and environment and digitalisation.⁴⁶

UN Women supported the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia to finalize, design and print the publication “Women and Man in Serbia” offering data for the following areas: Population, Health, Social protection, Education and science, Employment, Wages and pensions, living standard, Time-use, Judiciary, Decision-making, and international indices. In addition, draft Gender Equality Index for Serbia has been developed jointly with the Statistical Office, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, and the Coordination Body for Gender Equality.

Consultations during preparation of the GAP showed that partner institutions on the local level e.g. local administration (municipalities) have limited capacities to deal with gender issues. Typically, these have experience with one or more small scale ad hoc projects which offered information on inclusion of women in socioeconomic life or participated and supported by their presence during activities CSO sector implemented. Most of these activities were considering economic empowerment of women in rural areas, rarely some documents were produced and published through public campaigns to raise awareness of the public about the local champions of small businesses such as processing, tourism and marketing.

⁴⁶ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

Academic institutions through their individual researchers were involved with few projects doing research about women and their engagement in forestry, tourism, agriculture, handicrafts, rural development etc. As institutions they respond to legal obligations to possess documents (plans) related to gender issues, but no specific activities are recorded as a follow-up.

Institutions on the national level regularly fulfil legal requirements to create gender related policy, but no activities are recorded either within these institutions or extension in the sector they are responsible for. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management have rural development measures planning teams which are taking care to include in every measure an advantage for women which apply for financial support, yet no further actions are taken to promote these opportunities in the field. This was the task of the Rural development network, which is not operative in the sense of providing regular support to rural development on the field anymore.

Majority of CSO working in related areas such as forestry, rural development, environment, hunting, nature protection has no experience with gender issues if not engaged with projects financed from international organizations, where coverage of gender issues was obligatory at least through provision of women participation in trainings or measuring of impact of conducted activities on women.

1.4. Gender equality among the target group

The project will bring benefits to the whole of Serbia, although its activities besides work with the administration is targeting primarily rural spaces⁴⁷ in which the majority of its interventions will occur. Stakeholders to be involved, no matter if they are public or private, mainly live and operate in rural areas dealing with agriculture and forestry which represent the fundament of local economies, while agriculture and forestry lands are the main natural resource local communities base their livelihoods on. Therefore, rural women and men are, as a beneficiaries of local ecosystems services and their managers, the main target group of this project. Rural areas of Serbia are not the space that can boast of gender equality. Stakeholders differ in their inclusion and rights to make decisions; positions they hold in the hierarchy for the businesses, or resources management - leadership or simple representation differ between women and men. Gender inequalities are rather common for the sector in Serbia, but also the feature of the overall community from which they are spilled over or reflected in the economy sector. Role of women and men in the rural communities of Serbia differ, creating a need for further analysis of the gender equality which follows.

Education

Out of 127,463 illiterate over the age of 10 in Serbia (1.96% of the total population after the 2011 Census), 104,632 were women (3.12% of the total number of women).⁴⁸ There are distinct gender inequalities in education, evidenced in: higher illiteracy rates among rural women compared with both rural men and urban women; the greater share of rural women with lower education levels relative to their male counterparts; and gender segregation by field of study, reflected in the higher concentration of girls in the social services, social sciences and humanities subjects, and determined by traditional perceptions of typical “female” and “male” occupations.⁴⁹ Women are concentrated in the social sciences and humanities, as well as in health and social care services (where employment opportunities and wages are lower), and few women are enrolled in the fastest-growing fields of study, such as engineering, technology, a and information and communication technology.⁵⁰ Boys are

⁴⁷ According to the Law on Territorial Organization the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia can be considered as rural territory, excluding the territories of administrative centers of 24 cities. The total area of the Republic of Serbia is 88,499 km², and the rural areas are about 75,000 km² or 85% of the territory.

⁴⁸ Statistical Yearbook 2021, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

⁴⁹ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁵⁰ FAO (2021): Ibid

more numerous in the fields of education: electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and metalworking, geodetics and construction, transport, forestry and woodworking, and geology and mining⁵¹.

In the general population, 97.7% of boys and girls attended high school. 88.9% of the total available girls were in secondary education. Child labour in rural areas jeopardizes children's educational attainment and also their safety and development. Boys are more exposed to this risk than girls, due to traditional attitudes that men should manage farms and boys' early engagement in work is considered to be an introduction to managerial, decision-making roles in adult life.⁵² Among students who complete general secondary four-year education (high school), there are more girls (58%) than boys (42%). The proportion of boys to girls graduating from three-year secondary vocational schools is three to one.

Girls enrol and graduate colleges and universities more often than boys (57% of students and 59% of graduates). Among those who had a doctorate there were 57% of girls compared to 43% of boys. Among graduate students, women dominate in fields of education, while men prevail in the fields of: Informatics and Communication Technologies (74%) and engineering, manufacturing, and civil engineering (63%). In the field of services, the shares of women and men are equal (50%). In 2016, more women (57%) than men (43%) became holders of PhD degrees. Women make majority in many academic fields; however, men are more represented in engineering, manufacturing and construction (57%), and in services (69%).⁵³

Men are dominant among the members of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art (SANU). In 2016, over 90% of all members were men. There is not a single woman in the Department of Social Sciences. Among those employed in the field of R&D, in 2016, men are dominant with a 52% share. Almost the same proportion is among scientific researchers. The largest share of women researchers is in medical sciences, almost 60%, and their share is smallest in engineering and technology, about 37%. In the majority of age-groups, women are more computer-literate than men. In older age groups, there are more men among computer users. The majority of internet users are also women.⁵⁴

The educational structure of the rural population is less favourable than the urban population (a higher share of persons with low qualifications and a lower share of persons with tertiary education), and the share of the population with no education or lower education levels is higher among rural women than among men. The highest rate of illiteracy is found among rural women (compared with both rural men and urban women), which is the result of the characteristics of education of the older generations. There are significant gender differences with respect to secondary school and higher education attendance,⁵⁵ yet the share of the female population participating in postgraduate education – formal and non-formal is extremely low, except in cases when women is employed in a state institution, education, or administration when additional education and on-job trainings are obligatory. This is usually justified with obligations within households and lower mobility as stated above. The Project should be able to provide trainings in locations accessible to majority of stakeholders and/or a transport for all interested women in accordance with their needs.

Education and training in the field of forestry There are 4 career opportunities for forestry education in Serbia: (a) vocational training as forest technician; (b) higher education for forest engineering at BSc level; (c) higher education for forest engineering at MSc level; (d) higher education for a doctor of biotechnical sciences - Ph.D. level. The student can start his higher education at the University of

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁵³ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2017): Women and men in the Republic of Serbia, ISBN 978-86-6161-166-7

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

Belgrade - Faculty of Forestry with an undergraduate study program at the Department of Forestry, and to continue its education through master's degree studies and doctoral studies at the same Faculty. In the last 10 years, 850 students graduated from secondary schools (training for forestry technicians), 101 of whom were women. The highest number (92) of secondary school students was recorded in the school year 2011/2012 and the lowest in 2015/2016. On average, the share of female students in these schools is 12%. The highest share (16%) is recorded in the current school year (2020/21) and the lowest (9%) in the previous school year (2019/20).⁵⁶

Future women's access to information, education, technical knowledge, and/or skill upgradation

Serbian Gender Equality Strategy for the period from 2021 to 2030 anticipate besides the overall need for inclusion of women (especially women from vulnerable groups including rural women) also the specific need for their inclusion in green jobs, circular economy, and new technologies as the important sectors for increasing their chances in employment and self-employment. That is related also to the implementation of the Western Balkan Green deal and other strategies and programmes developed by the Government in the field of environmental protection and climate change in which the proposed project fits perfectly. Rural women in Serbia are, however, less likely to access and use information about opportunities for sustainable development in their environments. They also lag behind in using communication technologies. This makes rural communities more vulnerable and capable of accessing information and using opportunities which exist, neither to express their interests nor to participate in their creation. Computer literacy will be one of the crucial points in building skills of rural women which are expected to enter new green businesses.

Strategy for the development of education and upbringing in the Republic of Serbia until 2030 in its general and specific goals does not deal with gender issues related to the number of boys and girls, and later men and women, covered by all levels of education from preschool to university level as well as those in the adult education program. The situation is the same with the Action Plan for the period 2021-2023 for the implementation of the Strategy for the development of education and upbringing in the Republic of Serbia until 2030.

Gender imbalance is obviously highly expressed in the information and computer technology sector, which represents the best prospects for progress both economically and in terms of participation in creating the future. Data on gender structure indicate the dominant participation of men in the ICT sector, which makes up two thirds of employees in the entire sector. In the narrower field of information technologies, men occupy as much as 70% of jobs; i.e. the participation of women in ICT is 30%. It is estimated that less than 20% of women are in managerial positions, while less than 10% of women are in the leadership position of a company director.⁵⁷

Economic participation, employment

Per FAO's National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods: Serbia (2021) aging index ((the ratio of the population aged 60 years or more to the young population aged 0 to 19 years old) is 142.9, with significant differences between women and men (165.0 and 122.1, respectively). The unemployment and inactivity rates are considerably higher among "non-urban" women" (13%.3. and 41.6%, respectively). Overall, the employment rate of women is 38.1%, which is by 14.7 % less than the employment rate of men. The greatest gender gap on the labour market in regard to employment is noted in the age category 55–64 years, in which the employment rate of women is 32.5% and the employment rate of men is 52.8%. Unemployment is quite prominent among the subgroups per gender and age among younger women aged 15 to 24; the unemployment rate is 39.5%. /While men

⁵⁶ FEM4FOREST

⁵⁷ Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 year

of the same age group have a slightly better indicators, they are in no better position, for men between 15 to 24 is 32.2%. There are twice as many self-employed among men than among women (in the age group 15 to 64, 28% of men and 13% of women are self-employed).⁵⁸

The share of informally employed women and men is larger among self-employed persons than among those employed in all age groups. The largest number of informally employed are aged 15 to 24 (67.4% women and 54.5% men). The inactivity rate for women is higher by 16.3 p.p. than for men (54.6% vs. 38.2%). The largest gender gap considering inactivity occurs in the age group 55 to 64, where the inactivity rate for women is 64.8% and for men it equals 40.4%.⁵⁹ In the period 2016-2019, the number of registered employees among both sexes increased, with the growth of registered employment being more pronounced among women - about 93 thousand or 10.3% compared to about 70 thousand or 6.4% among men.⁶⁰

The gender gap in employment is more pronounced in rural areas than in urban areas. There are limited employment opportunities outside agriculture for women living in rural areas and agricultural work accounts for a significant share of their employment (one-third of rural women). This type of work usually takes place in family holdings, where women are seldom registered as holder or manager, and more often in the role of unpaid family worker. Rural women are less likely than urban women to find employment in highly skilled jobs, and are more likely to be employed as farmers, in manual and elementary occupations. In comparison with men living in rural areas, women are less likely to be employed as farmers and in manual jobs, and more likely to be employed in unskilled and elementary occupations.⁶¹

The activity rate of women in the labour market was 46.5% and by 15.5 percentage points was lower than the male activity rate (62%) in 2020 in the working age population older than 15 years. The female employment rate was 42.2% and by 14.4 percentage points was lower than the male employment rate (56.6%). The female unemployment rate was 9.4% and by 0.7 percentage points was higher than the male unemployment rate (8.7%).⁶²

The gender pay gap for 2014 was 8.7%, which means that women were paid 8.7% less than men. Serbia is among countries with the lowest gender pay gap in Europe. However, if earnings are observed according to educational attainment or occupations, the difference in earnings between women and men is significantly higher than the average gender pay gap, most often in favour of men. „ The proportion of women with low wages in the total number of employed women (24.4%) is higher than the proportion of men with low wages in the total number of employed men (21.6%). „ Despite the fact that women, on average, live longer than men, it is noticeable that in all categories of old-age pension beneficiaries, women live, on average, shorter than men.⁶³

Women work daily 5 hours more than men unpaid and spend on average 42 minutes less on paid work than men. Women work 40% more on unpaid jobs and are engaged 2 hours and 18 minutes more time on unpaid household work than men. Their total work hours are longer. 95% of women and 77% of men participate daily in unpaid jobs⁶⁴. There are differences between urban and rural areas, with

⁵⁸ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2017): Women and men in the Republic of Serbia, ISBN 978-86-6161-166-7

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2026 year, Official Gazette of RS No. 18/21 and 36/21 - correction

⁶¹ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁶² Report on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment from 2020, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/dokumenti/izvestaji/sektor-za-rad-i-zaposljavanje-0>, Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

⁶³ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2017): Women and men in the Republic of Serbia, ISBN 978-86-6161-166-7

⁶⁴ Gender analysis of economic value of unpaid work in Serbia, UN Women, 2020. Available at: http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Analiza_monetarne_vrednosti_neplacenog_rada_UN_Women_SRB.pdf

rural women spending more time on unpaid household work than any other category⁶⁵. Taking into consideration the average time spent on unpaid care activities, UN Women in Serbia 2020 have estimated the value of unpaid care activities to 15,1% of GDP where 10,4% of GDP is unpaid work of women and 4,7% of men.⁶⁶

There are significant regional disparities in the indicators on women farm holders/managers and women employed in farming (higher share of women was recorded in medium and large-sized holdings in the Vojvodina region, where women are younger, better educated and, as a result, more likely to use modern management practices. The South-East Serbia region is distinct from other regions due to its higher share of women across all indicators, which is likely to be related to negative demographic trends and women's longer lifespans. (Life expectancy in Serbia for the year 2020 was 71.4 years for men and 77.2 years for women.⁶⁷). Conversely, women in the Šumadija and Western Serbia region are underrepresented among farm holders and managers, probably due to the higher share of younger members in the household and the higher rural population density in this region⁶⁸.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on rural women. The most severely affected sectors were wholesale and retail trade, accommodation, transport, food and beverages, service activities, forestry and logging, and crop and animal production. In these sectors, over 700 000 workers are estimated to be at immediate risk because of the characteristics of their jobs, which include informal employment, short-term contracts, and working in micro enterprises which are particularly vulnerable in this crisis.⁶⁹ Both women engaged in agricultural activities and those working in non-agricultural sectors have been significantly affected by the crisis. Women living in rural areas and working in non-agricultural sectors have been at the highest risk of losing a job compared with women from urban areas and men from both types of settlements. In addition, more rural women than rural men have had to leave their jobs and stay at home to take care of children.

During the state of emergency, rural women have also faced many challenges considering maintaining value chains for their products (starting farming activities on time, finding the necessary workforce, and selling their products). Some innovative solutions were used, such as marketing online, but these were not available to the majority of rural women. Rural tourism got the new chance,⁷⁰ but investments required to get more rural households on board could not be obtained, while direct financial support and loans offered were insufficient - rural women need additional support to fully recover from this crisis.

Division of labour among women and men

Rural women's roles are limited to households and farms. They also often sell agricultural products on local markets. Sometimes within agriculture products one can also find wild fruits or eatable greens, while mushrooms and medicinal plants in the form of herbal mixtures are more often offered by men. Women move into the forest to collect forest products just in company with a man from the family (rarely other women; it is more typical for women returnees from urban areas). Although many rural women drive vehicles, they rarely use their family cars to go alone to the forest, or elsewhere. Of course, differences exist and reflect the culture, religion, and ethnicity of the community. Villages which are side by side, however, thanks to the history of their inhabitants, can differ in habits. For

⁶⁵ Time use survey, Republic Office for Statistics, 2015.

⁶⁶ Gender analysis of economic value of unpaid work in Serbia, UN Women, 2020. Available at: http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Analiza_monetarne_vrednosti_neplacenog_rada_UN_Women_SRB.pdf

⁶⁷ Statistical Yearbook 2021, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

⁶⁸ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁶⁹ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁷⁰ Đorđević-Milošević et al. (2020). Economic diversification policies and rural tourism in South East Europe, https://seerural.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Economic_diversification_policies_and_rural_tourism_in_SEE_2020.pdf

instance, villages from which families worked abroad, have more emancipated women population which use vehicles and agriculture machinery regularly, while a neighbouring traditional village will have even women going to locally organised training for women producer groups on milk quality accompanied by men. When it comes to employment in enterprises dealing with forestry, women deal usually with administration and accountancy.⁷¹

In the period 2015-2019 the share of informal employment of women of working age was 15.6% (the share of informal employment of men was 15.8%), which is a result of higher growth of formal employment of women (19.4%) in that period than the growth of formal employment men (11.5%). The structure of informal employment differs significantly in terms of professional status: mostly informally employed women work as assisting household members, and informally employed men are predominantly self-employed. The position of these women is particularly vulnerable, as they not only do not exercise their formal employment rights (as do other informally employed) but are not paid for their work.⁷²

Employment status, including unpaid employment, of men and women in urban and rural areas in Serbia in 2018, is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Employment status, by sex and area of living in Serbia in 2018

Employment status, by sex and area of living in 2018 in [%]				
Status	Men in urban areas	Men in rural areas	Women in urban areas	Women in rural areas
Salaried workers	79.4	54.6	89.3	55.6
Self-employed with employees	6.1	2.8	3.1	1.4
Self-employed with no employees	13.9	36.8	6.4	21.9
Contributing household members	0.7	5.8	1.2	21.1

Source: FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

Contributing household members/unpaid family workers are a specific category in the workforce. They are engaged in some form of family business, and work without a labour contract, salary or social benefits based on labour status. Rural women working on family farms form a significant proportion of this category. When family farms are registered, they have a legal obligation to pay social contributions themselves (for example, pension, and disability insurance). However, if the farm is not registered, their economic engagement is fully informal, and they are not legally required to pay social contributions. Even on registered farms, informal workers often do not pay social contributions and therefore do not exercise their welfare rights based on employment.⁷³

Longitudinal data from the Labour Force Survey indicate a steady fall in the number of unpaid family workers. In 2007, there were 132,553 women and 47,528 men in this employment status, while in 2019 there were 99,200 women and 37,900 men. The majority of unpaid family workers are located in rural areas, working on family farms - 91,400 women and 32,600 men in 2019. Their share in the total number of employed persons is 7 percent for women and 2 percent for men.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

During the first half of the 1990s, the economic position of farmers improved relatively, compared to the lower strata of manual workers (unskilled and semi-skilled), as a result of less elastic demand for agricultural products. The fact that farmers are no longer at the very bottom of the material position hierarchy has persisted to this day (with a further significant reduction in their numbers and an increase in inequality within the group, due to the formation of a subgroup of large landowners).⁷⁵

Women made up the majority of employees in administrative services (60%), among professionals and artists (59%), in service and trade occupations (57%), among engineers, professional associates and technicians (53%), and in simple occupations they made up half of the employees in 2019. Men were in the majority among artisans (83%), machine operators (78%), executives (directors), officials and legislators (67%) and farmers (58%).⁷⁶

There are differences between rural and urban women in terms of the type of occupation they perform. Employed women in rural areas are less likely than employed women in urban areas to work as professionals, artists, engineers, technicians, associate professionals, and clerical support workers, and much more likely to work as farmers, crafts and related trade workers, machine operators and unskilled workers in elementary occupations. Relative to rural men, rural women are more likely to be employed as professionals, engineers, clerical support workers, service and sales workers, and in elementary occupations, and are less likely to be employed as trade workers and machine operators.⁷⁷

In the process of implementation and monitoring of measures, activities and interventions in employment policy, a gender-sensitive approach will be applied and strive to achieve gender-balanced results based on gender-disaggregated data. The principle of gender responsive budgeting, which implies equal inclusion of unemployed women and men in measures, including gender-balanced opportunities in the employment process, will continue to be applied.⁷⁸

Political participation: decision-making and leadership

Serbia has made the greatest progress in the subdomain of political power, in comparison with its progress in other domains and when compared with the results of many other countries in Europe in 2018. The reason for this is the enforcement of legal provisions on the 30 percent minimum quota (and since 2021, 40 percent) for women in Serbian National Assembly and AP Vojvodina Assembly. Women members of parliament account for a 37.6 percent share in the legislative branch, Serbia's National Assembly. The current National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia consists of 98 women (39.2%) and 152 men (60.2%). The President of the National Assembly is a man. The National Assembly has 20 committees headed by 5 women (25%) and 15 men (75%). Among the deputy chairmen of the board are ten women and nine men, and among the secretaries of the board are 16 (80%) women. On the board, women make up the majority of the six boards. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia is a woman. Of the five Deputy Prime Ministers, two are women (40%). Out of a total of 23 ministries, 10 were led by women (43.4%).⁷⁹ The participation of women in political life begins with their engagement with political parties and their associated bodies. Membership in political parties is, however, not monitored systematically by gender. Data on membership in political parties and their bodies are not disaggregated by gender; they are often out of date or unavailable on the parties' websites.⁸⁰ According to the social stratification survey conducted by the Institute for Sociological

⁷⁵ Lazić M., Cvejić S. (2019): Stratification changes in the period of consolidation capitalism in Serbia, Institute for Sociological Research, Belgrade

⁷⁶ Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 year

⁷⁷ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁷⁸ Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2026 year, Official Gazette of RS No. 18/21 and 36/21 - correction

⁷⁹ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁸⁰ Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 year

Research (ISR) in 2018, the share of rural women's party affiliation is lower than that of women living in urban areas (6.8 percent and 10.6 percent, respectively).

Both rural and urban men are more politically engaged – 11.6 percent of men in urban areas and 13.7 percent of men in rural areas are affiliated to political parties, out of which 6 percent are active members. Looking at specific forms of political participation over the last three years (for instance, petitioning politicians or government officials, signing appeals/petitions and joining a strike or blockade), we can see that the urban population, both women and men, are more likely to engage in these forms of political activism. The survey reveals that around 9.4 percent of women and 9.8 percent of men have signed some form of appeal or petition which is significantly lower than in urban Serbia. Only 1.5 percent of rural women engaged in diverse protests in public (double less than urban), while rural men are also less active in this way (0.8 percent), compared with 3.6 percent of urban.

Looking at the share of women elected as presidents of municipalities or mayors, there is a substantial gender gap; only 6.6 percent of women hold these positions. The share of women as municipal presidents/mayors equals 6.6% only, and 31.2% of councillors in local government bodies are women.

Environmental authorities provide equal opportunities for women and men to participate in the natural resource management system and in the right to be informed about the state of the environment. The Ministry in charge of environmental protection implements gender mainstreaming during the planning, management and implementation of plans, projects, and policies for environmental protection.

Leadership of women in local governance/political systems and formal/informal institutions

Gender Equality at the institutional level was shown by the Research of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality from 2017. In 150 local self-government units in Serbia, there are 12 women (only 6.6 percent) in the positions of mayors (mandate from 2016-2020) which is evidence of a substantial gender gap.⁸¹ 13.2 percent of women are in the position of the president of the Municipal / City Assembly. The data from this research shows that there are only 12.7 percent of women on local community councils, which is about 2,000 women compared to 19,000 men. Also, when it comes to managerial positions, research data show that men make up 83.7 percent of directors of public companies. Another survey conducted by the same institution shows that one fifth of Serbian citizens still think that managerial positions are intended for men and that the best role for a woman is to be a housewife.⁸² At the level of towns and municipalities, 33 percent of towns and municipalities have not enforced the statutory quota.⁸³

Considering the small share of women in local community bodies, rural women experience far fewer opportunities to improve their lives in accordance with the needs of the communities in which they live. According to the findings of a qualitative study of women living in the Zlatibor district, for instance, the patriarchal values typical of rural communities represent a significant barrier to their more active involvement in political life. Moreover, the barriers to political engagement identified by the women included: the absence of family and community support; the ingrained opinion in rural areas that a woman's place is at home; a disregard for women's opinions and proposals; and the heavy combined burden of work on the farm, household work and caring for children or other relatives.⁸⁴

⁸¹ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁸² Đajić M. (2020): Women's leadership in the context of social cohesion – public policy proposal, UNPBF, <https://cmv.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Z%CC%8Censko-liderstvo-i-drus%CC%8Ctvena-kohezija-Milos%CC%8C-%C4%90ajic%CC%81.pdf>

⁸³ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

There is a considerable opportunity to promote women leadership, following the results of various projects supporting entrepreneurial activities of rural women, especially of the existing cooperatives and associations women initiatives in the last two decades. During 2020, GIZ regional campaign *“Empowered women, empowered economy”*⁸⁵ it was noticed that rural women united in women entrepreneurship organisations had much more follow-ups after the projects supporting their work were finished than average. However, these initiatives failed to expand on local and regional communities (men) afterwards, even in cases when local communities did recognise their achievements meaning that leaders of these initiatives no matter of achieved results or increased capacities are considered local community leaders even when no other local leadership exist.

An example of good practice in promoting the leadership of women in politics is the establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Network in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. It was founded in 2013 by the decision of all women deputies, and still exists today. The Women's Parliamentary Network was the first multi-party group to submit joint amendments to the budget and managed to negotiate their adoption with the Government of Serbia. A good social example is also the Women's Platform for the Development of Serbia. It is an informal network that seeks to connect women's voices through dialogue, within the women's movement and with decision-makers. It seeks to include and reinforce the voices of women from vulnerable groups primarily through cooperation and dialogue with women's organizations and women experts. It is based on the "Palić process" which gathered women from Serbia and the region for the first time in 2000 to talk about what kind of future they want - what public policies, what institutions, what services, what everyday life.

Women's and men's participation in household and community level decisions

Rural women in Serbia are much more oriented to the local community because their mobility is lower. They are mostly unemployed/housewives and work informally in agriculture and their primary role is taking care for children and household, food processing. They are often engaged with work in stables or orchards in the yard. They also have low levels of education (mostly elementary school) because they leave high school and marry young. If they manage to educate further, they often leave their villages and move to towns, except if these are suburban or close to some industrial centre when they combine employment on the farm and in households with formal employment. Being preoccupied they are basing their primary farm production on lands in vicinity of their households, contributing to their degradation due to intensity of their use and mismanagement of its fertility and pollution (particularly in case of milk and pig production in stables which is often combined with off-farm employment). In such a household organisation, abandonment of remote plots of agricultural land (arable and grasslands) is regular, which is leading to their economic degradation (transformation in coppices). Forest exploitation is also oriented towards closest stands and those easily accessible due to existing roads.

The main use of private forests in rural areas (and as a consequence degradation factor) is the use of wood in the industry and for the heating. This activity is based on mechanization and physical strength and that reduces women's ability to make decisions about use of the forest or land, even if they are formal owners of the land. Because of the role in the household and gender roles, they have lower levels of the autonomy and influence in decision-making at the household and/or community level.

In some projects in Serbia is already noticed that women with knowledge (technologies), information (available funds) and skills (running machinery for instance, or introducing processing, handicrafts, tourism, or other forms of adding value to primary products) have much more favourable position in

⁸⁵ GIZ (2020): Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe” (SEDRA), implemented jointly by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in Southeast Europe (SWG) and GIZ Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Legal Reform in the framework of a regional awareness campaign: “Empowered women, empowered economy”

making decisions. Also, men informed about the importance of the role of women in value chains (for instance, quality of food products, food safety, promotion, and marketing skills) start reducing their resistance to include women members of their families in decision-making⁸⁶. In the public sector women with additional skills and higher education do not necessarily benefit in getting more attention and opportunity to participate or make decisions, except in cases when they are politically engaged. Therefore, the introduced rule of having more than 30% of women taking decision-making positions in the Government does not necessarily respond to women skills, similarly to men.⁸⁷

Women's civic participation is characterized by predominantly traditional patterns, reflected in their participation in church-affiliated and other religious organizations and associations, in events related to handicrafts, and in humanitarian actions and similar forms of civic activity. Women do express a readiness to join women's cooperatives, but these types of cooperatives are very rare. Types of decisions usually made by rural women are linked to the daily routine in households. If large investments are to be made, women and men mainly share responsibilities. Investments on the farm are more in the hands of men; rarely women are asked for the opinion. Community decisions are under men's jurisdiction, except in cases where single women run household. Constraints restricting women's active participation in household and community level decision are rather cultural than economic or political (patriarchal culture as described above).

In local self-governments, during the planning, management and implementation of plans, projects and environmental policies, gender mainstreaming is applied. This is the result of much stronger environmental awareness and involvement in environmental organisation of women than men. Recent struggles for water in Serbia (protests against derivation hydroelectric power plants) have increased synergy in communities under threat, mobilising both men and women. Yet men were those who were traditionally expected to defend physically their properties and interests; so, activism is in vulnerable communities still more in the hand of men, which is a logical consequence of the violent character of recent events. The project should go further in empowering women and all other members of local communities in decision-making considering environmental protection, natural resources management, forestry, and rural development policies. For this purpose, ecological movements of various kinds could be used as a driving force for the project activities and a vehicle for getting on-board rural communities.

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

2.1. Situation of women and men in rural areas and the forestry sector

According to the Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2021-2030. year, the **economic position of women in the Serbian countryside (rural areas) is unfavourable** due to less chances for sustainable employment and less personal ownership of resources (land, arable land, and real estate). In addition, there is inadequate access to: community services that would increase women's chances in the labour market (care and nursing services for children, the sick and the elderly), public transport, information on rights and available support, information technology, knowledge and lifelong learning programs would create opportunities for sustainable employment, self-employment, cooperatives, and social entrepreneurship. Current support for women in agriculture and rural development is insufficient and needs to be replaced by systemic support that contributes to sustainable change and improves the quality of everyday life in rural areas. All measures proposed to reduce the gender gap in the economy should especially include women from all age groups in the countryside.

⁸⁶ SIDA project "River of Milk" in South-East Serbia

⁸⁷ Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, 2017

The share of women farm holders in Serbia in general is comparable to that found in countries with similar cultural, economic, and social heritage. According to the Farm Structure Survey (FSS) in Serbia, in 2018, women farm holders accounted for 19 percent of total farm holders and women farm managers for 15 percent of the overall total. There has been a slight increase in the share of women farm holders since 2012, but the average age of women farm holders is 65 years, suggesting that this increase is primarily related to the depopulation of villages and traditional inheritance patterns in which the farm holding is passed to the eldest family member.⁸⁸ **There is no data on female ownership over forests in Serbia.**

According to the study conducted by the project FEM4FOREST in 2021, in the forestry sector (generally defined as covering forestry, sawmilling, wood processing and furniture manufacture, as well as pulp and paper production), data are available on positions and gender distributions in forest administrations and state-owned forest companies. There are no exact data of share of female workers in SMEs in forestry and NWFPs-based private enterprises in Serbia. Jobs in the public forest sector seem to be more attractive to women. Data presented in this study give an indication of the number of jobs in the public forest sector and the shares of women and men, without an insight into the type of jobs and the qualifications of employees. This analysis will also inform the integration of relevant modules in the syllabi prepared within the project frames.

Women in forest administration

The share of women in forest administrations in Serbia is 36% (3 out of 4 female employees in the forest administration are trained foresters, and it seems common that women hold leadership positions in forest directorates at provincial and state levels). Around $\frac{3}{4}$ (76%) of women employed in the Forest Directorate have professional forestry education. Almost all of them (14 out of 16) are forest engineering graduates and 2 have master's degree. Around $\frac{1}{4}$ (24%) of employees in the Section of forestry and hunting inspection are women. All of them (8) are forest engineering graduates.

Women in forest decision-making

Women are heads of the Department for forestry policy and implementation of measures for forestry improvement and the Department of the Section of forestry and hunting inspection in Belgrade. Apart from these positions, there were no other management positions where women had been in the previous 10 years. In addition to management positions, women (with professional forestry education) work on the following tasks within the Forest Directorate: forest protection, monitoring and analytical data in the field of forestry; monitoring, the implementation of forestry policy measures; protection and improvement of forestry; planning activities in the field of forest reproductive material, republic forestry, and hunting inspector.

Women in the public forest user sector

In State Forest companies only 20% of women (trained foresters) work, while in both public and private companies. The share of women in the total number of employees in Public Enterprise (PE) Serbia Shume and PE Vojvodina Shume" is 3,191 and 1,443, of which women are 699 and 239 respectively. Total number of women with professional forestry education is 188 and 42, respectively, of which no one holds PhD degree, while MSc degree has 5 and 10 employees and BSc/graduate forest engineer degree 127 and 22. Forest technicians were 56 and 10 in PE Serbia Shume, 22% of the total number of employees are women, and 27% of them have a professional education in forestry (67% are graduate forest engineers).

Currently, women (with professional forestry education) hold following management positions: head of gene fund and nursery production department, head of development department, head of foreign trade and marketing department, head of forest management and forest management planning

⁸⁸ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

section, head of forest utilisation section, head of commercial affairs section, head of forest administration. Women were in the same management position in the last 10 years, as well as assistant director for forestry and head of department for forest protection and protected areas.

In PE Vojvodina Shume, 17% of the total number of employees are women, and 18% of them have a professional education in forestry (52% are graduate forest engineers). In this enterprise, 3 women (with professional forestry education) currently hold management positions: head of forest management and forest management planning section; head of section for hunting and fishing; head of commercial and marketing section. As well, women were in the following management position in the last 10 years: director-general (2005-2019), assistant director for forestry (2015-2019), head of forest estates and forest administrations, head of forest management and forest management planning section, head of section for hunting and fishing, head of commercial and marketing section.

Employment in the public forestry and logging sub-sector accounted for 0.3% in Serbia in 2019 (SO, 2020)⁸⁹. Employment of women in forestry decreased in Serbia, from 28 % to 27 %⁹⁰ in the period 1990-2010. Between 1990 and 2015, the share of women employed in the forestry and logging was ranging between 14 and 16%⁹¹. In the sub-category “silviculture and other forestry activities”, the share of female workforce was 16% in 1990 (the highest), and decreased 2000 (9% in 2000 and 2010 and 10% in 2015). This sub-category has the highest share of the female workforce, compared to other sub-categories⁹². According to available data, no female workers were recorded in the period 1990-2015 in sub-category “logging”⁹³. The share of female workforce in the sub-category “gathering of NWFPs” was the highest (6%), while in other years the share dropped (3% in 2000, and 4% in 2010 and 2015)⁹⁴. In the sub-category “support services to forestry”, the share of female workers was 10% in 1990 (the highest), 5% in 2000 and 6% in 2010 and 2015.⁹⁵

Women in the private forest user's sector

The data for female employment in the private forest sector is limited and can't be properly even estimated, since there is no active register of forest owners,⁹⁶ while forest land is not included in the Farm registry. Plus, due to that fact, female forest ownership shares do not correspond with equivalent shares of women in the forest workforce,⁹⁷ so any cross-calculation might not be precise either.

Women are generally not owners of the land; they are more often in the role of the unpaid family worker on the family farm than in the role of farm head or manager⁹⁸. Therefore, it is difficult to assess how the lower number of women employed in forestry and logging. The share of women doing lumber jack work or being engaged as technicians in forestry operations is rather low. Women are much more represented in informal forest work related to non-timber forest products (collection, processing, gastronomy, and tourism), which is much less visible and hardly possible to quantify.

Women have lower potential to carry out the processes of rural household economy diversification, even though diversification is an important driver of rural development in the family farming sector.

⁸⁹ SO (2020): Report on registered employment - annual average 2019, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade

⁹⁰ FAO and UNECE (2020): Forest sector workforce in the UNECE region Overview of the social and economic trends with impact on the forest sector, UN Forestry and Timber Section, Geneva, Switzerland

⁹¹ FRA (2020): Global Forest Resource Assessment 2020 Report Serbia, FAO, Rome.

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ FEM4FOREST (2021): Country report for Serbia, Forest in Women's Hands Report on Current Situation and Position Of Women in Forestry in Danube Region, Belgrade

⁹⁶ UNECE (2020): Who owns the forest? Forest ownership and tenure in the UNECE region. UNECE/FAO/FACESMAP study, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva

⁹⁷ Country report for Serbia in Fem4Forest Status report (2021)

⁹⁸ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

Nevertheless, the share of women managers is higher than average in relation to holdings specialized in certain types of primary production, such as poultry, sheep, goats, cereals, oleaginous and protein crops, root crops, arable crops, flowers and decorative plants, mushrooms, grapes, nuts, and fruits; and this is in line with traditional forms of gender segregation in performing economic activities on family farms. The types of production with an above-average share of women holding managers vary from region to region.⁹⁹

Women in nature conservation and forests related services, research, and education

Trained female forestry professionals are more prevalent in research, knowledge transfer, pedagogy, and nature conservation. This fact might imply that women coped with the lack of job opportunities in traditional forestry, by shifting to other subfields. The women participation in forest pedagogy (employees) is relatively high (forestry engineering (B.Sc.) level from 26% at the Forestry Faculty of University of Belgrade; share of women with doctorates in forest sciences is also considerable). Given the high shares of female graduates in forestry programs, the future of the sector may become more female. The forest sector in the Balkan countries is seen as significantly potent in terms of self-employment in wood production and collecting and processing non-wood forest products, especially in rural areas. Research in Serbia showed that 12,300 self-employed workers in rural areas were engaged in firewood production in private forests. This is important, as these workers are not reflected in national employment statistics (Vasiljević, 2015 through UNECE, 2020).¹⁰⁰

For female working in nature conservation is more attractive than in timber production. The share of women in a total number of employees in National parks (NP) PE “NP Fruška gora” / 42 of 140, PE “NP Đerdap” 24/85, PE “NP Kopaonik” /71 and PE “NP Tara” 37/185. In PE “NP Fruška gora”, 30% of the total number of employees are women, and 14% of them have a professional education in forestry (50% are graduate forest engineers). Currently, 1 woman (with professional forestry education) holds a management position, working as nursery manager. In the last 10 years, 2 women were holding management positions (head of protection and improvement unit). In PE “NP Đerdap”, 28% of the total number of employees are women. However, none of them has a professional forestry education. In the last 10 years, women with professional forestry education did not hold any management position.

In Public Enterprise “National Park Kopaonik”, 13% of the total number of employees are women. However, none of them have a professional forestry education. In the last 10 years, 1 woman (with professional forestry education) has held a management position, working as head of the section for improvement of natural values. In PE “NP Tara”, 20% of the total number of employees are women, and 27% of them have a professional education in forestry (70% are graduate forest engineers). Currently, 2 women (with professional forestry education) hold a management position, working as assistant director for planning, protection and development and head of private forests section. In the last 10 years, 4 women (with professional forestry education) were holding management positions (assistant director for planning, protection, and development; head of private forests section; a nursery manager, and head of landscape planning section).¹⁰¹

Available data indicates that women also tend to be more present in forestry societies, play greater roles in Environmental NGOs and civil society groups and may lead entrepreneurial associations. However, there are no official statistics on private forest organisations (PFOAs) in Serbia, which are also registered as NGOs. Thus, the number of members, the share of women, forest area, etc. remain unknown.

⁹⁹ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

¹⁰⁰ UNECE (2020): Forest sector workforce in the UNECE region - Overview of the social and economic trends with impact on the forest sector, Geneva timber and forest discussion paper 76, United Nations, Geneva

¹⁰¹ FEM4FOREST (2021): Country report for Serbia, Forest in Women's Hands Report on Current Situation and Position of Women in Forestry in Danube Region, Belgrade

2.2. Gender and climate change in Serbia

Men's and women's vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change

Women have lower resilience and often lower adaptation capacities to respond to climate change and related emergencies, such as floods, droughts, or other extreme weather events. Due to their lower preparedness to act in emergency situations, a lack of information, a lack of relevant resource, and weaker economic and financial capacities, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disaster events. At the same time, measures to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and reduce environmental pollution can have a more significant impact on rural women than men because they more frequently belong to groups that are particularly vulnerable to such processes. For example, women are more often the holders of smaller farms or businesses; on average, as farm holders, they are older; women tend to be at greater risk of poverty; and they are also more exposed to weather-related risks due to their work in open fields. Recent policy initiatives at a national level have started to integrate gender equality into climate change policies and mechanisms.¹⁰²

One of the facts supporting the conclusion that women will express more vulnerability to any change including climate change-related events, is the fact that rural depopulation in Serbia is not solely related to low birth rates but also to migration trends which women are more susceptible to. Namely, the share of women in the total population of migrants leaving rural areas is higher than the share of men, and the same trend is observable in the younger population (20 to 35 years) compared with the population aged 35 years and older. These trends have significantly contributed to the loss of the working age population in their reproductive years in rural Serbia and have further aggravated depopulation trends (Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, 2018).¹⁰³

Gender inequalities that may be exacerbated by climate change impacts

Because of their higher exposure to the risk of poverty, and unavailability of climate change adaptation resources, women in general, and rural women in particular, are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, especially when their livelihoods depend on the use of natural resources, as is the case with agriculture. In addition, women are mostly excluded from the decision-making process, which means that they have less influence on policies designed to combat climate change and increase the population's resilience to climate change.¹⁰⁴

In the last twenty years, Serbia has been hit by five major floods and five major droughts that have occurred alternately. Both floods and droughts occurred during the main agricultural season, significantly reducing the yields of fruits, vegetables, cereals, and other agricultural crops, which caused great economic losses to many farms and agriculture as a whole. In addition, the floods caused great damage, destroying fertile land, farmed and wild animals; rural and agricultural infrastructure, and also human casualties were recorded. The biggest direct negative impact of these natural disasters was on plant production. Livestock production was most often indirectly negatively affected - malnutrition, poor water quality, and unfavourable breeding conditions. Adverse impacts on plant and livestock production had a negative impact on food production, resulting in irregularities in the raw materials supply.

All of the above affected the socio-economic status of the population, whose livelihood depends on natural resources and agriculture. Although production and farm holders are prevalently men, women own about a quarter of small farms with a standard output of up to € 2,000, who are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Very often, they are completely dependent on agricultural production and natural resources. Seasonal workers in the agriculture sector are also among the most vulnerable

¹⁰² FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

socio-economic group. The women farm holders and family workforce members engaged in agricultural production in these holdings are often elderly women. In rural areas, there are numerous one-person households with elderly women. Such households are at higher risk of poverty, which limits their climate change adaptation capacities.

Gender inequalities in real estate ownership are very pronounced – women are much less likely than men to own or co-own property. No data disaggregated by rural/urban area are available but given the prevalence of traditional norms in rural areas, it is possible that the share of rural women owners of real estate is relatively small compared with the aggregate data for Serbia.¹⁰⁵

Inequalities and the way they affect people's capacity to adapt to climate change

Various analyses and studies done in recent years in Serbia confirm the vulnerability of the population and national economy to climate change. The vulnerabilities of groups and individuals are different and depend on a series of internal and external factors. The level of vulnerability depends on the population/social group and activity, their income, and expenditures, i.e., the inequalities that exist between different social groups, as well as on a series of individual parameters for each individual.¹⁰⁶

The global process of transformation into a carbon-neutral and climate-adapted society, as well as all other overall processes, can additionally endanger already vulnerable population groups - poor, very old, very young, with serious medical problems, poorly educated, without the possibility of retraining and without access or with limited access to modern education system for new practices, technologies, and sectors in which more employment is expected in the coming period.¹⁰⁷

The impact of climate change on the population in rural areas is primarily reflected in lower income due to a drop in agricultural production. Also increased health risks due to a decrease in the availability of water resources and more difficult access to health care are feasible. Among them, farmers with minimal capital are certainly the most vulnerable because, most often, they are completely dependent on agricultural production and natural resources. Seasonal workers in the agriculture sector are also among the most vulnerable.¹⁰⁸ Job losses are expected primarily in sectors linked to fossil fuels, and in the agriculture sector, as well as in large enterprises. On the other hand, employment in forestry and small and medium-sized enterprises can be expected to increase.¹⁰⁹

Floods and heat waves can have particularly negative effects on so-called socially isolated population groups, which by definition include the elderly, patients with chronic ailments and the disabled; those who depend on social assistance, live alone, members of ethnic minorities, homeless people, but also residents of remote and infrastructure-wise poorly connected areas.¹¹⁰ Extremes coming with climate change as much as social risks of diverse kinds are threatening the struggle to improve gender equality/equity and the achieved results. For instance, the floods in 2014 in Serbia and other disasters in the last 5 – 10 years (including COVID-19 pandemic) showed significant gender-based differences in impact on men and women, as well as in coping mechanisms and participation in prevention and the response, between men and women in affected communities. Gender issues have been identified and acknowledged in several gender analyses and gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction has become a significant issue. Since the floods in 2014, DRR policy and strategic framework has been changed and included measures for gender responsive disaster risk management.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Božanić D., Mitrović Dj. (2019): Study on the Socio-economic Aspects of Climate Change in the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade

¹⁰⁷ Božanić D., Mitrović Dj. (2019): Study on the Socio-economic Aspects of Climate Change in the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ FAO (2021): National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia, Budapest <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

2.3. Role women and men are anticipated to play in the context of the project

The project is designed to follow relevant Serbian national legal and policy frames, as well as international good practices in achieving gender equality in the context of all its planned activities. However, the project has an intention to go beyond following the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹¹² recommendations,¹¹³ which have expressed their concern that rural women lack access to education, formal employment opportunities, access to land ownership on an equal basis with men, while their participation in decision-making is limited.

Gender inequality in the rural economy was also concluded earlier in the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia, 2014-2024. Among women there is less participation of active persons, less employees, and fewer ones who work outside agriculture than among men. From the perspective of regional differences, it is noticed that in Vojvodina the participation of unemployed persons among women is slightly lower than among men, which does not mean that their economic position is better, since less than men are employed in the non-agricultural sector, less engaged in agriculture and inactive in a significantly larger number comparing with men. The situation of women is much more unfavourable according to all indicators in South and East Serbia, where gender differences are particularly strong in all segments of the labour market.¹¹⁴

Engagement of women in forestry in Serbia remains limited by the needs of households, particularly in rural areas where basic social services and infrastructures are poorly developed. The responsibility carried by rural women in various forest value chains is limited to processing part of NWFP, while their role in firewood and game meat value chains is minimal. In the primary part of the NWFP it is considered that women should avoid going alone to forests due to risks of attack by humans, while animal attacks are not identified as relevant. Hunting and cutting of wood are also almost completely reserved for men, while on the rare occasion, women participating are considered as special attractions, so subject of sensational writing in written and electronic media. Very few women could be found to lead management of hunting grounds, do game wardens jobs or lead hunting societies (more in Vojvodina, then in the rest of Serbia), but they are regularly highly appreciated and valued for their work. Processing of meat as much as processing of timber is also a man's job in Serbia, and not just in rural households, but generally through the sector. It is considered that these jobs are too hard for the physical constitution of women, so they come to the value chains, eventually in the marketing segment, or in case of tourism and catering in the gastronomy part. The processing of the majority of non-wood forest products is mainly in women's hands, although men are also often involved in processing.¹¹⁵

In the context of Serbia's aging population and gender disaggregated labor division, rural women, particularly those living alone or with dependent children, are more exposed to energy insecurity due to their poor access to equipment to self-procure fuelwood from forests and therefore are more vulnerable. Furthermore, as forests in the proximity of rural settlements are being overexploited, fuelwood becomes more expensive, and women are more and more dependent on men to acquire such vital resources.

The project assessed that within rural communities, families, especially those headed by single female-headed households, assuring access to high quality fuelwood is an important way to contribute to

¹¹² EU WOMEN body

¹¹³ CEDAW 2019 Recommendations provided for the upgrade of the Serbian National Programme of Rural Development

¹¹⁴ Beker K. et al (2017): Situation of rural women in Serbia - report, The United Nations Entity for Women

¹¹⁵ Dordevic-Milosevic (2019): Socio-economic perspectives of Sustainable forest management & local development in Serbia, Study for GCP/SRB/002/GEF: Contribution of sustainable forest management to a low emission and resilient development in Serbia (FSP), FAO Belgrade

their increased resilience and overall decrease in vulnerability. With the enhancement of the regulatory framework, the project will provide the rules and regulations that biomass sellers must abide by, giving the consumer more possibilities to make informed choices and, hence, possibilities to reduce consumption.¹¹⁶ This can contribute to cost savings, time and labor efficiency, and an overall reduction of vulnerability. The measures will be accompanied by awareness-raising campaigns on the sustainable utilization of wood fuel. A more efficient biomass burning approach will, in addition to reduced costs, also lead to less indoor air pollution, potentially improving health outcomes for women and children who normally spend more time in their home.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, the support to the country in developing short rotation plantations for energy purposes will also provide income opportunities, particularly for women-headed households, to obtain incomes from previously unfarmed land. The activity will also rehabilitate soil quality, making the land more climate resilient and increasing its value.

2.4. Resources that women and men have access to

Women and men have equal legal access to all resources: economic, financial, physical, natural, and other assets. How much of this access is in practice, as well as who manages or controls access to these resources is a question in itself. According to Gender Barometer data, differences in ownership between men and women in Serbia are linked to differences in inheritance and differences in registration of property.¹¹⁸ According to available data, 25% of real estate is exclusively owned by women; 65% is exclusively owned by men, and 10% is jointly owned in 2019.¹¹⁹ Men are more often owners of immovable property and automobiles, while women are more often co-owners.¹²⁰ Men own around 3/5 of the entire property, and women around 2/5, while the percentage of men owners of agricultural land is twice as high as the percentage of women.¹²¹ UN Women's Shadow report from 2017 provides some indicative figures reflecting properties in rural areas of Serbia:

- 26.7% holdings registered to women
- 15.9% of women manage holdings
- men own around 3/5 of total property
- 88% of houses in rural areas are owned by men
- 84% of women do not own agricultural land¹²² (no data for forests)

The gender gap in the economy in the Republic of Serbia is more visible through the unequal position of women and men in the labour market, differences in earnings, pensions and income in general, differences in entrepreneurial activity, access to resources to support employment and self-employment, participation in the informal economy, differences in ownership over real estate and land as well as participation in decision-making in the economy. In each of these observed elements,

¹¹⁶ According to research in Serbia [E4tech, 2015] using high quality ("dry") firewood compared to low quality ("raw") wood reduced energy consumption per m² of the heated surface by 16% to 24%.

¹¹⁷ The modern "top-down" approach for burning fuelwood produces 75% less Particulate Matter pollution than the traditional "bottom-fire" ignition method. [https://uneuropecentralasia.org/sites/default/files/2022-](https://uneuropecentralasia.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Together_for_warm_homes_and_clean_air_Outreach%20brief.pdf)

11/Together_for_warm_homes_and_clean_air_Outreach%20brief.pdf

¹¹⁸ Marina Blagojević Hewson, Rodni barometar u Srbiji – razvoj i svakodnevni život

¹¹⁹ Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 year

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Gender Disaggregated Data – Western Balkans, Statistical Reports 2005-2013, FAO, available at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/nr/land_tenure/Genders_Report_WB.pdf

¹²² UN Women (2017): Shadow Report to the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women regarding the fourth reporting cycle of Serbia, ISBN 978-86-900100-0-4

women are still in a far more unfavourable position, while in the group of women there are particularly vulnerable groups of women whose economic situation is even more unfavourable.¹²³

Declaratively, prevailing gender gap in education and in the labour market, the knowledge and empowerment of women in the field of green technologies and innovations is priority for gender equality are *ad-hoc* addressed in Serbia. Most activities in the field of encouraging women's entrepreneurship (consistent support measures envisaged for support in SME Development Strategy, Industrial Production Development Strategy and Regional Development Strategy) are still small scale and project-based, rather than systemic. Concrete support exists within rural development support measures (national and IPARD). Women's organizations and women's informal groups do fund raising addressing, traditionally primarily with the violence against women. Work on economic empowerment of women, especially rural women in agriculture, straightening the women's activism in rural areas is limited in time and budgets, although often appear in various forms of calls for grants in diverse economy and social sectors, institutions, and organisations. This offer is not consistent, neither long-term, so that beneficiaries can plan their actions in long-term.

Yet, the legislative framework is formulated in such a way as to enable equitable access for all beneficiaries, with low eligibility thresholds and requirements, especially when it comes to accessing local and national financial incentives. Support for rural development in Serbia is designed to prioritize holdings registered to women specifically through the following measures: boosting economic activities in rural areas through support for non-agricultural activities; supporting young people in rural areas; and providing loan support schemes and incentives for the preparation and implementation of local rural development strategies. This type of support for women farm holders is reflected in the higher number of points awarded to women applicants when ranking potential recipients of subsidies, as well as in a lower interest rate on loans. Nevertheless, the available data provide an insufficient basis for drawing conclusions about whether these support measures are effective in facilitating the economic empowerment of women, particularly given that the share of women among farm holders and managers remains low. The share of women recipients in total funding for rural development is 23.2 %, which is above their average share among farm holders and managers (19 % and 15 % respectively)¹²⁴.

This indicates that women are actively engaged in achieving compliance with the eligibility criteria for financial incentives. The data indicate that the average amount of incentives per holding is higher for holdings registered to women than for holdings registered to men. The advantages (extra points) given to women in the application process for some of the grants might be a factor that motivates women to register their holdings. However, there is no evidence to support this assumption. Measures aimed at boosting non-agricultural activities are another special form of support for rural areas. These measures are intended to boost the development of the tourism sector in rural areas, as well as to revive one of its subsectors – arts and crafts, i.e., cottage industries.¹²⁵ Although these activities can also influence the forestry sector and its SFM, there are no data to illustrate this effect, while direct support for supporting forestry does not exist.

Annual reports on the state of small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness for the period from 2015 to 2020 do not show data on women's entrepreneurship, so there is no data on how companies operate in relation to the gender of owners, and there is no publicly available progress report on implementation of the Strategy for Small and Medium Enterprises and its pillar number 6, which refers to women's entrepreneurship. There are still no systematic gender statistics on women's entrepreneurship.¹²⁶

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

Some progress has been made as a result of the gender responsive budgeting process in the Republic Statistical Office, with the introduction of new gender indicators in business statistics. Progress has also been made with the Public Procurement Office, which since 2020 has started monitoring the participation of women-owned enterprises in the total number of concluded contracts or framework agreements through public procurement procedures on an annual basis. The Public Procurement Office's Performance Report for 2020 states that this percentage was 23%, which is 8% more than the estimate.¹²⁷

Although most of the difficulties faced by entrepreneurs are common to both sexes, there is a particular impact on women entrepreneurs due to sector choice, gender discrimination and stereotypes, underdeveloped and inflexible childcare, difficulties in reconciling family, private and work responsibilities, or differences in attitudes of women and men towards entrepreneurship. Women also have less property and real estate registered in their names, which makes it difficult for them to access finances.¹²⁸ Rural women have poor access to finance (primarily the use of credit cards and opportunities for securing a loan; for example, for housing or consumer purposes¹²⁹).

2.5. Specific needs of women and response strategies to their vulnerabilities

Women have lower resilience and often lower adaptation capacities to respond to climate change and related emergencies, such as floods, droughts, or other extreme weather events. Due to their lower preparedness to act in emergency situations, a lack of information, a lack of relevant resources, and weaker economic and financial capacities, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disaster events. At the same time, measures to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and reduce environmental pollution can have a more significant impact on rural women than men because they more frequently belong to the groups that are particularly vulnerable to such processes: for example, if they run farms in Serbia, rural women are more often the holders of smaller farms. The same applies to businesses. On average, as farm holders, they are also older and often single. Women tend to be at greater risk of poverty; and they are also more exposed to weather-related risks due to their work in primary production.

Recent policy initiatives at the national level have started to integrate gender equality into climate change policies and mechanisms. The project will try to assist with gender mainstreaming of related policies to respond to recommendations of the CEDAW Committee in 2019 and will provide incentives for the improvement of the situation of rural women in terms of advice for the access to land ownership, its sustainable use, employment in forestry sector and models for obtaining economic security¹³⁰. Recognizing specific forms of discrimination of women in rural areas this Project is taking into consideration needs of women for provision of knowledge and investments for starting entrepreneurial initiatives on the available land resources by starting primary production, adding value and marketing advice as a basic or additional employment.

In the course of the preparation of this assessment, people, both women and men, were involved in expressing their needs. Interested stakeholders, private and civil society stakeholders which were engaged primarily insisted on pairing financial with the technical support, which is fitting with the experience of the expert involved. The planning and implementation of activities in various development projects were usually decoupled – either capacity building or investment support was provided, generating limited results with no follow-up after the projects were finished.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Strategy for support the development of small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship and competitiveness for the period from 2015 to 2020

¹²⁹ FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

¹³⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2019, no page number

In all training and investments, when possible, the project will give higher priority to women¹³¹ owning degraded coppice stands or lands for conversion to forest or bioenergy plantation and will ensure that at least 30% of beneficiaries are women, yet the project will not make specific window for women, since experience have shown that actions with an environmental impact demand strong synergetic action and support of whole local community. If just concentrated on the economic benefits of women, wider benefits might be overlooked. This is happening because there is a stereotype that novelties in resources management should not be brought by women, or to be more precise innovative, energetic women who are accepting the challenge to change are considered freaky and a threat by patriarchal society. This is even emphasized with the fact that large percent of women responding positively to initiatives such as those which the project will promote, are those which are either single or considered too dominant in their communities, being heir of land and properties in families which had no male offspring.

Engagement with women and women focused organizations in the geographic area and focal sectors of the Project is crucial to understand the challenges and barriers that they face. At project inception, women and women-focused organizations will be included in consultations to ensure that perspectives, needs and challenges are considered by the Project and in adaptive management. The project will also provide support to local partnerships and take care to properly inform both women organizations as those which have no gender earmark, considering that in situation in which women organizations are often excluded from the regular flows of information from the economic and environmental sector (even stigmatized for being established to make a mess in social sphere).

2.6. Opportunities to challenge gender stereotypes and increase positive gender relations

Recent discussion over the implementation of Nature Based Solutions, by the ADAPT project of the IUCN, come out with the notion that one of the key gender issues in environmental protection is that benefits from natural resources exploitation are reserved to men and negative consequences and risks are shared to the whole community. This is coming from the fact that a very limited number of ecosystem services are utilised and reduced to quantifiable amounts of products.

In the forestry sector this is driving directly to timber and further to hard physical work only man a capable of doing. Stigmatic approach, however, lead us to the obvious replacement of theses, in which the majority of even this work I mechanised, so man does actually use machinery for this work and not their mussels. On the other hand, women are actually those who work mostly manually and men with mechanisation and heavy machines which with modernisation do not anymore require physical strength, but skills and knowledge women and men can obtain equally. Anyway, the perception is that male work is harder and therefore more important. If provided with the training how to use machines and financial support to purchase them, this could not just improve women's economic activities and increase income, but improve their position in the society and make them capable of using their resources without being exposed to extortion of money, which will decrease benefits (it's common that women forest owners, especially those which are single, due to lack of machinery and skills, but also safety issues engage man outside of their families to manage their forests, which is often resulting in frauds; if they are married in majority of cases their husbands make all decisions and manage forests alone).

The project should provide inputs for final including forestry measures in Rural development programme of Serbia, while also providing set of rules to help women get advantage in obtaining

¹³¹ A preliminary list of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender will originate from the digital cadastre of the Republic of Serbia to ensure that gender accounting is well reflected in both the baselines and targets. Depending on the results of the analysis of the cadastre targets will be increased at design.

financial support for improving their economic position and participation in sectors of green and circular economy. Namely, the National Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Serbia for the period 2014-2024 defined two strategic goals very important for forestry:

1. Sustainable resources management and
2. Environmental protection and efficient public policy management and institutional framework improvement for agricultural and rural areas development.

The present institutional capacity for supporting rural development is so modest that specific forestry measures remain so far not in place. However, rural development measures which are active, supporting improvement of competitiveness also have space for forestry if properly upgraded, as much as those of environmental kind, rural economy diversification, and upgrading of life quality in rural areas. These could be related directly or indirectly to the forestry sector and also bring on board women and youth using National Rural Development Program, as well as the IPARD programme budgets.

Measures for improvement of protection and quality of agricultural land shall mean the type of subsidies which improve physical, chemical, and biological features of the land, meaning that they should also be in relation to the forestry, although forest land is not mentioned (for instance prevention of erosion and improvement of agriculture land include establishment of forest belts etc.). Under the conditions specified in the Law, structural subsidies may be directed to certain group of beneficiaries, such as farmers that predominantly produce for the market, cooperatives, local self-government units, associations and other beneficiaries engaged in forestry production, processing, and sale of forestry products. The upgrades should include opening Farm Registry to private forest owners and implementation of special conditions for providing advantage to women initiatives as already provided in some measures for women farmers dealing with agriculture (see page 40).

Rural development support to forestry might have two kinds of windows:

Direct support to forestry through forest measures:

- investments in afforestation
- investments in machinery and equipment for primary forest production
- investments in forest infrastructure
- investments in biomass-based energy material production (processing of wooden materials into pellets, briquettes, charcoal etc.)
- investments in strengthening other wood processing
- investments in wild game farming (at the moment it's financed from the Fund for Hunting Economy)
- etc.

Indirect support to forestry supporting local community benefits through investments in strengthening food production competitiveness through investments in storing and processing of NWFP:

- diversification of rural economy through introduction of tourism related also to forest ecosystems and supporting non-consumptive activities (tourist accommodation, catering, infrastructure, heating equipment etc.)
- diversification of rural economy through introduction or strengthening food supply chains to tourism (investments in processing equipment for NWFP or gastronomy)

- support to HNMF and agroforestry systems for sharing benefits between agro-diversity conservation, nature conservation in nature protected areas dependable of pastoral activities, maintaining forests, and providing quality inputs for tourist activities & food production.
- etc.

Women forest owners will be invited, and incentives will be provided for raising quality forests and forest production systems with establishing full value chains and partnerships – horizontal and vertical, and making them operative. Opportunity to restore their forests including conversion of degraded coppicing stands into high forests and afforestation, including conversion of degraded agricultural lands into bioenergy plantations, will increase value of the lands owned by women, making them less vulnerable socially and economically. Consequently, their confidence and safety will be increased, while participation in decision-making and quality of life will be increased. With the additional knowledge and skills provided, they can establish or strengthen value chains for products they produce or diversify production and get new opportunities for employment. If additional incentives are provided for adding value to these products, women will be able to overcome the problem of lower mobility which is creating unemployment and get more options for income generation in their own environment, without even moving from their farms.

Opportunity for planning and investing in decarbonization of private sector companies, in particular through *insetting* (by **investing in the forest ecosystems**) women may use to provide **assured supply of raw materials for their businesses**, while providing significant, measurable benefits to communities surrounding their value chain which on the end will provide double benefit - **building a strong reputation of a responsible entrepreneur and (environmental) leader** of their communities.

To mitigate risk of not benefitting fully from these anticipated outcomes of the project for rural women, the project will pay special attention to providing good communication and dissemination and preventing lack of information. The project will build on experience gained from the implementation of various agriculture and rural development projects. For instance, when it comes to financing agricultural production and access to favourable credit lines (subsidized loans), women and persons under the age of 40 years are in Serbia granted preferential treatment for obtaining loans and lower interest rates, but access to such information become complicated for “digital illiterate” people after the printed version of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MOAFWM) publication for registered farmers (introduced with the farm registry) ceased to exist along with the Rural Development Offices Network (used to have continuous campaigns in all municipalities of Serbia).

An opportunity for rural communities to improve their access to information are represented by diverse associations such as women clubs and societies, entrepreneurs and craftsmen, private forest owner’s organisations and other branch organisations such as beekeeping, organic producers, etc. which are perfect hubs if regularly fed with relevant information. The situation in which Rural Development Network of Serbia is not anymore handy, support to the new networking of the kind within the project is necessary to provide benefit to rural population and decrease their vulnerability deriving from isolation. The synergy with interested of the MOAFWM in agriculture and rural development with the forestry sector, could be expanded to ministry in charge of environment, tourism, and rural affairs, especially because agriculture extension works poor and other ministries do not even have such an extension.

Lack of access to transportation also disempowers rural women: they are less likely to have a driving licence or own a car, and are consequently more reliant on the use of public transportation, which is unsatisfactory due to an insufficiently developed network of bus routes (limited frequency of buses;

inconsistent schedules), poor connectivity to the nearest cities, and long distances to bus stations.¹³² This is the shortage which prevents women employment off-farm as much as access to information, financial and legal advice, etc. Creating more jobs through diversification of on-farm and off-farm local jobs through afforestation and adjacent services establishment in local communities is one of the top contributions of the project to vulnerable communities and marginalised groups, in particular rural women and vulnerable communities from remote areas (mountain and other marginal) or with the limited mobility (due to bad road infrastructure and transport, personal disabilities or exposed to various threats including those deriving from climate change such as natural disasters etc.).

Policy and programming documents pertaining to the development of Serbia's agricultural sector and rural areas take into consideration the gender components and the need for the economic empowerment of women in rural areas. Serbia's Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy, in its 12th priority action area pertaining to the Improvement of the Social Structure and Strengthening Social Capital, recognizes women as a category that needs to be empowered. Despite the efforts invested in promoting gender responsive budgeting, the national budget is not yet fully gender mainstreamed. The advances are even smaller at the local level, where the process of transitioning to the new budgeting system is slow.¹³³ In this respect, the project might contribute to a large extent to the gender mainstreaming of the existing budget intended for cooperatives from the portfolio of Ministry of Rural Affairs. In the end, an important mechanism for gender mainstreaming in national and local policies is gender-responsive budgeting is stipulated by the Law on Budget System.

3. SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES PROVIDED BY THE PROJECT

It is expected that the transferred technologies and interventions conducted will have impact on mitigation of risks of extreme climate-related disasters and climate change in the whole Serbia, which will have profound effect on vulnerable rural communities and support women and the energy security of their household to decrease the risks they face with due to climate change and mismanagement of key ecosystems services such as energy (e.g. fuelwood). Services and technologies provided by the project will be available and accessible to both women and men. The project will benefit the entire population of Serbia with a specific focus on sectorial stakeholders including vulnerable communities depending on fuelwood for energy, individual forest and agricultural landowners (farmers) and private companies interested in derisking their business and in decarbonizing their processes. In all training and investments, when possible, the project will give higher priority to women¹³⁴ owning degraded coppice stands or lands for conversion to forest or bioenergy plantations and will ensure that at least 30% of beneficiaries are women, where the percent originates from the average participation of women in the various sectors addressed by the project¹³⁵.

The project will provide knowledge through introduction of the up-to-date technologies related to afforestation, sustainable forest management and forest's ecosystem services (e.g. biomass for energy) use, and support investments in climate adaptive silviculture¹³⁶ practices and increasing the

¹³² FAO. 2021. National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Serbia. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7068en>

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ A preliminary list of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender will originate from the digital cadaster of the Republic of Serbia to ensure that gender accounting is well reflected in both the baselines and targets. Depending on the results of the analysis of the cadaster targets will be increased at design.

¹³⁵ Percentage of women involved in forestry is between 14% and 16% [FRA, 2020], percentage of women leading municipalities (2021) is 13% [UNDP, 2021.], percentage of women employed 48.5% [WB, 2022].

percentage of women graduating from agriculture, forestry and accounting universities and vocational schools in 2021 is (aggregated average) 35% [FEM4Forest, 2021], percentage of women involved in forestry in public institutions and public/private forest companies is (aggregated average) 28%[FRA, 2020].

¹³⁶ Tailored to the Serbian context from the experience of the US Forest Department, of the Spanish, Italian and French forestry sector as well as from concrete experiences in Lebanon and Armenia where adaptation of forests is considered a series of practices and actions (from seedling to maintenance) needed to enhance the ability of forest ecosystems to adapt and survive in the projected climate scenario. These include: the preparation of drought resistant seedlings; the use of clear handling and planting procedures and specific maintenance protocols.

forest cover, including by establishing shelterbelts/windbreaks¹³⁷ in agricultural lands and nature-based solutions for disaster risks reduction and soil quality improvements (agroforestry and agroecology technologies).

Specifically, the following services will be provided on the national level to the MOAFWM and other responsible ministries without specific concern about the gender, since the administration have reached satisfactory level in respect to involvement of women in all capacity building activities. Women will be involved in all stages of the process including public meetings and consultations. Their participation will be visible, recognised and empowered through permanent communication with the team preparing these meetings and consultations.

All documents as much as materials following capacity building actions conducted in administration to be developed will be available on the internet, but since access to digital means of communication is not equally territorially provided, while vulnerable rural communities and particularly their women members often do not have opportunity to use them, project will provide regular bulletin and info sheets which will be distributed not just on-line, but also in printed version through local civil society partners, chambers, agriculture extension services, public and private enterprises and municipal authorities. This action will be preceded by encouraging MOAFWM to re-establish support to the Serbian rural development network as the one recently performed efficiently distribution of information about the support measures available for development in rural areas.

Stakeholders will be regularly informed about the services project has provided within the strengthening of the *Forest Monitoring and Assessment System* and the establishment of the *Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System*. *National strategy and action plans* will be developed with the extensive participation of representation of all relevant stakeholder groups through a national campaign, with the special attention to the representation of all groups, women, and men, while documents will be published and shared in wider population. Addresses for posting will be selected in a way to reflect at least an existing share of women landholders in the farm registry (agricultural land) and cadastre (forest land), namely, bulletin will be mailed to women landowners as much as to men. Certain effort will be needed to expand the address book during the span of the project to include more women.

The programming of the rural development in MOAFWM should finally include forestry which will require establishment of the working group capable of transferring interest of the sector into suitable measures to be included in both National and IPARD plans, while specific interests of the adding value and strengthening forest products value chains should be introduced with all suitable measures of all axes. The consultation with the stakeholders from the women entrepreneur organisations will be of immense importance for shaping new conditions which will provide a positive discrimination for the future project applications deriving from women, youth, and disabled. Revisions will be needed in axes two to accommodate interest of the project activities related to silviculture, establishment of agroforestry and silvopastoral systems, maintenance and revitalisation of traditional farming and introduction of innovative technologies based on forest ecosystems in general (interest of women dealing with the processing of non-wood forest products to grow mushroom, medicinal plants, wild fruits and greens, game etc.).

The positive impact of the project for energy security and biodiversity will include consultations with women about the selection of species for afforestation and reestablishment of forest ecosystems in general (climate adaptive forestry seedlings which also produce fruits which could be local processed

¹³⁷ Establishing shelterbelts/windbreaks will not only raise the share of forest cover where most needed (e.g: Vojvodina and Southern and Eastern Serbia [GFA, 2019; NAP report, 2020]), but also reduce the negative impact of wind erosion on agricultural production and prevents burying of drainage and irrigation canals.

or used through women entrepreneurship). Consultation with women should be organised for identifying main problems with land degradation and land use in villages and their surroundings and options within the project to address them by selecting economically most suitable solutions and modelling actions which will mostly tackle land which is regularly used and maintained by women for production or as an environment for their side activities which have to benefit of the well maintained countryside (fruits and vegetable production and tourism).

The national standard for biomass production / handling and use will be based on available international good practices, developed with international experts but adopted to the Serbian context using expertise of women and men working in the business sector and civil society in Serbia.

Design of Execution guidelines for wood energy plantations and Guidelines for decision makers on LULCF to prevent soil degradation will reflect needs and specific problems in different rural regions of Serbia following the set of natural constraints and specific problems identified during the National Forest inventory and from the work of Soil department in the MOAFWM. *Execution guidelines for wood energy plantations* will be sent, besides the previously mentioned group also to unemployed persons under 40 using local registries. New national curriculum will be promoted in a Bulletin, and schools through a campaign for scholars which are entering high schools and faculties through media and lectures during the life span of the project. Information on the establishment of the *Regional knowledge- for CAS* will be shared through the same system with the addition of the network of Chambers of commerce and business.

The improved efficiency of wood biomass used for fuel besides planned activities should occur not just with the business sector, but to include women in households in despite do they possess or not forests or agricultural land. Getting them on board should be done through a wide national campaign in both rural and urban areas for all users of wood biomass for fuel, but promotional activities have to be set in a way to promote territory specific and relevant options instead of general solutions which are not applicable in the certain territory (replacement if wood biomass with the by-products from agriculture in plains of Vojvodina, use of biogas produced from domestic animals excrements in zones with developed livestock husbandry, food waste in urban and suburban zones etc.) Also, solutions for different scales of use should be presented (households, industries).

Services provided by the project should reach diaspora and land and forest owners in urban areas, which are presently not informed about possibilities to properly manage their resources. Since the phenomenon of owners who are distant from their lands is very present in Serbia, mechanisms are needed to be created to activate their potentials as much as to protect further degradation of forests they own (legal frames and incentives).

The project will transfer to Serbia the knowledge, technology and CAS practices needed to reduce the climate change and adaptation deficit of public and private forest stakeholders, as well as to enable the forest sector to become more resilient to climate change and contribute effectively and efficiently to the national decarbonization process. Besides public natural forests, 18.3 thousand hectares of private forests will be under CSA/SFM. Project will support all women initiatives, since priority for support are women and single women households. Selected civil society organizations will be engaged to provide better access to private landowners willing to do afforestation or other interventions planned within the project.

Enabling and strengthening Rural development network is identified as a shared mechanism for mobilizing private sector in rural areas. Institutional capacity development of such a network will in future represent a challenge and innovative approach to the mobilization of private actors in getting involved in decarbonization processes, which might provide more certainty for synergetic activities in

agriculture and forestry sectors (with the open possibility for getting on board also environmental one as much as tourism and services etc.). For the sake of enabling the forestry sector to fully benefit from rural development support provided nationally and through IPARD, Rural development network should be targeted also with at least all public awareness activities in this project.

Work with public and private stakeholders including key associations such as the Chamber of Agriculture, the Serbia Grain Association, the Chamber of Commerce, Forest Owner Guild and SerBio, etc. (the list from the Project concept might be expanded during the project implementation to accommodate also interest expressed by various women business associations) which are planned to provide smooth overtaking the ownership on and ensure participation of the private sector in their scaling up and replication at the national level of the project's activities and achievements.

Training and capacity development of both public and private stakeholders will be delivered regardless of gender. Specific attention will be paid to engaging as much as possible women landlords (landowners) using Cadastre and Farm Registry for transferring adaptive silviculture practices and technologies intended to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of investments in forests.

Investments will also be supported for the introduction of the combination of sustainable and climate adaptive silviculture practices (tailored forestry investments (afforestation / forest restoration / natural regeneration). Applications creating new job opportunities for women and young people (women and men) and new markets (e.g., CO₂ management, green biomass, climate adaptive nurseries, greening the fuel biomass value chain) will be particularly appreciated, advantage will be given through an addition of the points in scoring marks for the quality of proposal. The scoring system exercise will help create conditions for future use of similar support through national schemes for employment, use of rural development measures, etc.

Future investments should be expanded with the encouragement to municipal authorities to launch decarbonisation strategic planning. Design of a special set of measures could be encouraged for projects targeting efficient biofuels use in households for women and poor (such as, for instance, replacement of old with the more efficient heaters and stoves or introduction of alternative to wood fuels, small biogas production facilities, etc.).

Afforestation, reforestation, natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, and conversion of degraded coppice stands into high forests will be supported through transfer of technologies and financial support, followed by the technical assistance with the climate adaptive silviculture which will also include production of written guidelines on 1. nursery production, 2. soil preparation, 3. planting operations 4. management of the production of diverse and climate adaptive forestry seedlings. Women will be particularly encouraged to embrace these as a part-time jobs, while for young people (both women and men) incentives will be provided for start-ups in businesses of the kind and for generating full time employment.

4. PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

4.1. Assessment of risks related to SEAH

The assessment of risks within this gender assessment did not find any risks related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassments (SEAH). No indication of risks was found using presented methodology neither from the secondary resources, nor in discussions with implementing partners, nor beneficiaries in pilot regions communities in Banat (Kikinda) and Eastern Serbia (Dimitrovgrad) as typical regions for Vojvodina plains and mountain regions of Central Serbia which were used for a case study during preparation of the GAP. Civil society and public enterprises representatives also did not

raise this SEAH risk as a question during preparation of the gender assessment report. The SEAH risk was never a topic of academic research, so most probably dealing with the PSEA may be considered as a non-specific problem for the forestry sector.

FAO and National Designated Authority consider SEAH risks to be minor, as both institutions have strong mechanisms for preventing SEAH under which project will also abide. In the communities surrounding the project, SEAH is also not anticipated, based on FAO experience on other projects in the country.

4.2. Mitigating risks and preventing SEAH

The possibility for SEAH to appear is not specific to the project, but might appear in general, as in any other human activity, so rising awareness considering its threat might be useful for all stakeholders and local communities involved in project to prevent SEAH. Therefore, the project will work to strengthen all involved parties to be able to deal with Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The stakeholders engaged on SEAH safeguards within the project will be the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, PE “Serbia Shume” and “Vojvodina Shume” gender focal points and the focal points in local administrations (officers in charge of human rights and gender) together with the project PMU, which will have a gender and social experts. Both will work with relevant institutions (e.g. UNFPA, UNWOMEN, UNIVF, OCHA) to develop specific PSEA and SEAH trainings for extending necessary knowledge to project stakeholders and local communities. The project will have an ESS specialist point in PMU in contact with focal points in local administrations.

The constant coordination will be kept between the project gender and social experts, the National Gender Coordinator, and the Regional Gender Coordinator in FAO. The social expert will be in charge of keeping work with relevant gender/social welfare Government ministries and departments, other anti-gender-based violence organizations or networks while gender expert will work with focal points in local administration and project partners MOAFWM liaising with institutional stakeholders that are to project stakeholders and communities.

Preventing SEAH is envisaged through continuous work with women through the duration of the project – more specifically, stakeholder consultations prior and during project implementation will include awareness raising and stakeholder-differentiated understanding of SEAH related risks and mitigation measures. The project will ensure regular visits to communities and local institutions. The Gender and Social expert will work with local government or authorities and to sensitize community members on SEAH safeguards. The Gender and Social expert of the project will support local officials in campaigns on prevention of SEAH. Champions will be identified to, where applicable, act as allies on SEAH safeguarding. SEAH training on SEAH risks, how to report them and the services available including SEAH GRM established by the project will be provided to project stakeholders and communities.

Stakeholder consultations prior and during project implementation will include awareness raising and stakeholder-differentiated understanding of SEAH related risks and mitigation measures. The Grievance Redress Mechanism provides an accessible and inclusive survivor-centred and gender-responsive grievance redress mechanisms with specific procedures for SEAH including confidential reporting with safe and ethical documenting of such cases, that indicate when and where to report incidents, and what follow-up actions will be undertaken.

The Project will ensure that all concerns and/or incidents will be reported to the ESS specialist and the FAO Office of the Inspector General, as appropriate. The Project PMU will also have a gender specialist with PSEA expertise.

The Project Coordinator of the PMU will be responsible for documenting, monitoring and reporting on any grievances received and how they were addressed. AE is going to continuously monitoring and report on SEAH cases to the responsible Governmental body in the MOAFWM and if needed provide required documentation to Ministry of internal affairs, Ministry of justice, Ombudsman and other while keeping the confidentiality as required by the relevant policies and regulations in Republic of Serbia.

Part II: Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan

A project-specific GAP provided below should ensure gender mainstreaming in this GCF project. It mirrors the logical framework of the project and is an integral part of project/program design. It provides guidelines on priority actions within the logical framework, as well as those to be taken into account during implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

The project aims to upgrade Serbia's male-dominated forestry sector and associated decarbonization business by fostering inclusive and gender-responsive approaches that ensure no one is left behind. By promoting women's participation in developing innovative business models, the project will help create sustainable and equitable opportunities for all, contributing to both climate resilience and gender equality.								
Component / Outcome	Gender Sensitive Project Activities	Gender sensitive activities	Target	Indicators	Timeline	Budget	Indicative cost of the Component/ Output	Responsible partner
Inception phase	Consultations with local parties (including women and women focused organizations, private forest land holders and CSOs) to upgrade GAP	Data on ownership of land for afforestation collected and gender disaggregated. Conducting consultations for identifying specific measures related to territory specific features of the Serbian territory out of reassessed pilot areas, to identify employability of women in forest sector, women's preferences related to use of forests to upgrade gender action plan with measures and to provide relevant support within the planned project activities.	At least 90% of interested parties on the local level, primarily forest land holders, are interested in afforestation and strengthening biomass for energy and other forest products processing value chains.	<p>Number of participatory sessions with local CSO and community representatives</p> <p>Number of participatory sessions with women focused organizations</p> <p>Number of questionnaires filled and percentage of women included</p>	Inception phase	N/A ¹³⁸	8,501,506	PMU
	Networking institutions and upgrading capacities of key institutions and private sector operators to manage the decarbonization process from a gender skills/capacity perspective and build and interactive national network providing inputs for the evidence-based policies through	Conducting regular consultations and monitoring through the network of core national gender responsible institutions, private businesses and those participating in the project	All institutions participating in project - The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, PE "Serbia Shume" and "Vojvodina shume" and gender focal points and the focal points in local administrations have gender capacity enhanced	<p>Number of reports provided to the network (percentage of participants actively participating in the network sessions and reports presented).</p> <p>Number of training participants</p>	Entire project	50,000	N/A	PMU

¹³⁸ Included as part of inception phase

	continuous contribution of disaggregated data from forestry business sector			Pre and post training survey (perception of trainees after trainings) Sex and age disaggregated.				
	Survey of the national education curricula	Exploring gaps in addressing gender equality and inclusion specifically in the context of Serbia in all planned syllabi or introducing new topic as part of a separate module. Included as part of baseline survey	Whole education system in forestry assessed and targeted for introduction of gender related guidelines – high school legal aspects, academia access to financial and technical assistance, technique and technology employment in green business for women, young people and rural families	Number identified chapters for gender mainstreaming and social inclusion in Syllabi for schools and academic institutions involved	Y1 and Y2	\$ 50,000	\$ 8,501,506	PMU
Component 1 - National-level upscaling of sustainable and climate adaptive silviculture and carbon finance framework	Policy Development Sub-activity 1.1.1.4, 1.1.2.2., 1.1.3.2., 1.2.4.3, 1.2.5.3	Enhanced forest management and governance and carbon finance is mainstreamed across citizens and ensuring that it reaches all, including women	At least 60% of the women involved in the various sectors of interest are trained.	Number of training session, participating individuals and institutions ensuring that Pre and post training survey (sex- and age disaggregated perception of trainees after trainings)	Data collected annually by project M&E and Gender staff Y1-Y7 Gender sensitive survey carried out by external parties at mid-term and terminal evaluation Y3-Y7	\$ 331,007	\$ 9,196,453	PMU
	Awareness and Behavioral Change Sub-Activity 1.1.3.3		At least 50% of women are reached by the awareness and behavioral change activities	# of women reached by the awareness, behavioral change and communication campaigns # of women applying practices and approaches introduced by the project				
	Updates of the national education curricula Sub-activity 1.2.1.2		100% of the syllabi updated by the project will incorporate the gender-related matters and the concept of no one left behind"	Number of upgraded syllabi directly and clearly addressing gender related issues				
Component 2 - Forest structure	Innovation & Technology / knowledge transfer	Enhanced climate adaptive silviculture procedures and technologies are	At least 60% of the women involved in the various	Number of training session, participating	Data collected annually by	\$ 20,115	\$ 48,002,928	PMU

	Sub-Activity 2.1.2.1, 2.1.2.2, 2.1.2.3, 2.2.4.1.	mainstreamed across youth and ensuring that it reaches all, including women	sectors of interest are trained.	individuals and institutions	project M&E and Gender staff Y1-Y7			
	Updates of the national education curricula and regional knowledge. Sub-Activity 2.2.3.1, 2.2.3.2		4 Syllabi are upgraded	Number of upgraded syllabi	Gender sensitive survey carried out by external parties at mid-term and terminal evaluation Y3-Y7			
Component 3 - Private sector is engaged in sustainable and climate adaptive silviculture management of forest and decarbonization via AFOLU	Greening the wood biomass fuel value chain. Sub-activity 3.1. 4.1, 3.1. 4.2. 3.1. 5.1,3.1. 5.2.	Assessing VCs to identify stakeholders and their roles, gaps and needs of both men and women along value chains and compiling recommendations for addressing their specific needs	At least 40 enterprises involved in biomass production are assessed for identifying VCs gaps and needs, to ensure that greening recommendations will take into account needs and role of women	Number of value chains/products assessed	Data collected annually by project M&E and Gender staff Y1-Y7	\$ 48,625	\$ 22,426,217	PMU
				Stakeholders by gender, roles and position in the value chain				
				Number of recommendations provided to actors by gender				
	Forestry Investments. Sub-Activity 3.1.1.1, 3.1.1.2, 3.1.1.6, 3.1.2.1,3.1.2.2,3.1.2.3, 3.1.3.1, 3.1.3.2, 3.1.3.3, 3.1.3.4.	Rising awareness of women landowners (<30%) on the possibilities for benefiting of interventions	90% of the women owning forests/lands are informed about the objectives of the project.	Number of applications for assistance received by women/men	Gender sensitive survey carried out by external parties at baseline, midterm and terminal evaluation Y3-Y7	\$ 1,231,947		
		Raising awareness and changing mind-sets of women owning land to make decisions about its use in the context of the Project						

		needed to run new type of business						
		Providing investment support for forest restoration/ bioenergy plantations establishment (as a part time job or a start-up) for women entrepreneurs and landlords		Land surface per activity included by women/men				
				Number of companies/farms involved per activity owned by women/men				
	Capacity development and technical assistance for companies, service providers, national finance institutions, associations, and service providers. Sub-activity 3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.2,3.2.1.1, 3.2.2.1, 3.2.2.2, 3.2.2. 3.3.1.1.	Enhancing knowledge of private sector and institutional actors about climate risk assessment and decarbonization	100% women led enterprises identified are engaged and have produced their decarbonization strategies	Number of awareness raising campaigns organized on decarbonization				
	Innovation & Technology / knowledge transfer. Sub-activity 3.2.2.2, 3.3.2.1.	Strengthening consulting services for supporting private sector engagement in climate risk assessment and decarbonization.	At least 10 consulting firms trained for providing services. All of their woman consultants are trained	Number of consulting firms involved				
30% of women employed in concerned sectors and institutions are engaged in project’s activities			Number of women engaged with designing, implementation and/or monitoring of climate risk assessment and decarbonization strategies of companies					
					\$ 774,000			
Project Management	N/A	Improvement of technical and institutional capacities of the team members and partner institutions participating in project -in The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, PE “Serbia Shume” and “Vojvodina shume ” and gender focal points and the focal points in local administrations on the gender dimension	All team members and project partners have completed gender mainstreaming training in the forestry sector. The training will also include PSEA and SEAH module of trainers and have access to gender expert’s support when needed.	Number of private stakeholders included in the database	Y1 – Y7 (support anticipated during the whole project duration)	\$ 2,170,684	\$ 4,185,983	PMU
		Project team (e.g. gender and social expert) and		Number of women and men entrepreneurs,				

		stakeholders (government authorities) technical and institutional capacities increase on the gender concept and the gender dimension in development (including facilitation skills to engage women)		farmers and their groups sensitized				
				Number of the project staff and staff of focal points trained on the gender mainstreaming demonstrating increased awareness of gender and inclusions issue via pre and post training survey (perception of trainees after trainings) Sex and age disaggregated				
		Database of land properties and needs for their remediation or improvements gender enriching with disaggregated data	Gender expertise is permanently available to all project team members and partners (gender and social specialists engaged to organize trainings for project partners and provide regular expertise local communities)	Gender specialist involved in the project				
			Gender-responsive Stakeholder engagement strategy and Communication strategy are prepared and implemented					
Indicative total cost (USD)						\$ 4,676,378		

ANNEX 1. PSEA RISK SCREENING CHECKLIST

Ensuring basic risk mitigation measures are in place ahead of stakeholder engagement	Responsibility	Comments	Link	Source
Does the AE have a SEAH Policy (or SEAH provisions in another policy)?	AE	<p>Yes, FAO disposes of a SEAH policy. Harassment in all its forms is contrary to the United Nations Charter, the FAO Staff Regulations and Rules and the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. In line with Article 1 of the FAO Staff Regulations, the Director-General will endeavour to always ensure the highest standards of conduct by staff members.</p> <p>2. This Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority is consistent with the principles and values of the UN system concerning the prevention of harassment and abuse of authority.</p>	<p>The relevant FAO policies that address SEAH are</p> <p>Policy on Sexual Harassment</p> <p>Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority</p> <p>Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (PSEA)</p> <p>Whistleblower Protection Policy</p>	FAO
If the AE has contracted out stakeholder consultations, does that entity have a SEAH Policy (or are they contractually bound to apply the AE's)?	AE/Consultant	<p>As per contracts with external entities, PSEA measures also apply, in accordance with relevant contractual clauses in agreements. For this project, <i>stakeholder consultations were not outsourced</i>.</p> <p>The FAO PSEA relevant policies are also binding to person of any contractual status with FAO.</p>		FAO
Does the AE have an employee Code of Conduct?	AE	Yes, FAO disposes of a personnel code of ethical conduct (2021) that provides clear indication about PSEA and Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Authority and Harassment.	<p>https://www.fao.org/3/cb4863en/cb4863en.pdf</p> <p>FAO Code of Ethical Conduct</p>	FAO
If the AE has contracted out stakeholder consultations, does	AE/Consultant	<p>For this project, stakeholder consultations were not outsourced.</p> <p>All FAO personnel (including, but not limited to, staff members, consultants, national project personnel (NPP), personal service providers,</p>		

that entity have an employee Code of Conduct (or are they contractually bound to apply the AE's)?		volunteers, and interns) are expected to behave in accordance with the ethical standards in the FAO Code of Ethical Conduct.		
Have AE employees and consultants conducting stakeholder consultations been trained on preventing SEAH and the Code of Conduct?	AE/Consultant	PSEA training is among the mandatory trainings for all FAO personnel of all categories. In the next column is the list of mandatory trainings on SEAH and Ethical Code that all FAO employees must complete at the start of their employment.	https://www.fao.org/3/nd482en/nd482en.pdf Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) (Mandatory) Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (Mandatory) United Nations Course on Working Together Harmoniously (Mandatory) Ethics and Integrity at the United Nations (Mandatory) FAO Whistleblower Protection Policy (Mandatory)	FAO
Does the AE have a grievance mechanism in place in case of early SEAH complaints from stakeholder engagement?	AE	Yes, FAO has a GM in place for early SEAH complaints. FAO has a specific channel for SEA, which goes directly to the Office of the Inspector General. There is a 24h/ 7 days hotline for this.	https://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/en/ SEA complaints can be lodged through FAO's Office of the Inspector General by email, phone or online using EthicsPoint	FAO
Does the AE have a specialist on staff who can undertake the more advanced	AE	FAO confirms that sufficient technical resources and capacities to ensure compliance with GCF requirements regarding SEAH are available (see also the FAO Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures	https://www.fao.org/3/nk304en/nk304en.pdf	FAO

assessment in Stage 4 as well as deal with early SEAH complaints if they arise; and if not, does the AE require budget and /or assistance with this?		on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) FAO has PSEA specialists at global level that can support country-level PSEA Focal Points to undertake risk assessments.		
Contextual Level (and Baseline Conditions)	Reference	Comments		
Does the country have laws prohibiting sexual harassment / stalking generally?	National /State law (Gender Assessment)	Yes, Serbia disposes of number of laws, policies and strategies to contrast SEAH. These include - among others: the family law (2005), the law on Amendments to the Criminal Code (2016), the law on preventing domestic violence (2017) and the law on free legal aid (2019)	https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/es/countries/eur/ope/serbia?pageNumber=2	UNW
Do labour laws prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace?	National/ State law (Gender Assessment)	Yes, Serbia disposes of a specific law. The law which prohibits harassment in the workplace (including sexual harassment) is the Law on the prohibition of harassment at work (Official gazette of Serbia no. br. 36/10). This Law has been in force since 2010.	https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/2403/Labour%20Law%20Republic%20of%20Serbia.pdf	ILO
Does the country have laws prohibiting intimate partner violence (IPV)?	National/ State law (Gender Assessment)	Yes, IPV is addressed by the law on Amendments to the Criminal Code (2016), the law on preventing domestic violence (2017) and the law on free legal aid (2019)	https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/es/countries/eur/ope/serbia?pageNumber=2	UNW
What is the prevalence of GBV in the country?	National statistics (Gender Assessment)	According to UN-Women [UNW, 2023], in Serbia, at the national scale, lifetime Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence concerned in 2019 17 % of ever-partnered women aged 18-74 years while 34% while 2% of the same age cohort experienced non-partner sexual s violence (lifetime).	https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/es/countries/eur/ope/serbia?pageNumber=2	UNW
What is the legal age a person can marry?	National law	Serbia deposited the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2001, which sets a minimum age of marriage of 18, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in	https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/es/countries/eur/ope/serbia/2005/family-law-official-gazette-of-the-rs-no-18-2005	UNW

		2001, which obliges states to ensure free and full consent to marriage. Finally, article 23 of the family law (2005) sets the minimum age at 18.		
Despite any laws, what is the prevalence of child marriage in the country?	National statistics	1% of girls in Serbia are married before their 15th birthday and 8% before their 18th birthday. Statistics show a higher percentage in rural areas in both cases. Urban 0.7% and 4.6%, Rural 2.5% and 14%.	https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS6/Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia/Serbia/2019/Survey%20findings/Serbia%20%28National%20and%20Roma%20Settlements%29%202019%20MICS%20SFR_English.pdf	Serbia Statistic Office, UNFPA, EU
What is the income level of the country?	World Bank ranking (H, HM, M, LM, L)	Serbia is an upper middle-income country	https://data.worldbank.org/country/RS	WB
Where does the country rank on global gender indices?	World Bank Reports / Other	Compared to EU Member States, the United Kingdom, and other countries in the region, Serbia ranks 21st, between Croatia and North Macedonia. Compared to Croatia, Serbia has lower values on the index in the sub-domains of participation (77.0 versus 79.6), but higher values in the sub-domain of segregation and quality of work (62.5 versus 61.4). Compared to North Macedonia, Serbia has higher values in the sub-domain of participation (77.0 vs. 68.2), but significantly lower in the sub-domain of segregation and quality of work (62.5 vs. 70.7). Compared to first-ranked Sweden, Serbia has this domain of Index lower by 13.5 points, while compared to last-ranked Italy, it has an index higher by 6.1 points.	https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/events-files/gender_equality_index_for_serbia_2021.pdf	EU
Is there a national action plan on GBV and/or sexual harassment?	National government	Yes, Serbia is currently executing the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2021-2025.	https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/es/countries/europe/serbia/2021/national-strategy-for-the-prevention-and-combating-of-gender-based	UNW
Does the country have specialized services for survivors of GBV (at both the national and local level) including women's	Local gov / NGOs	Yes, there are at least 10 organizations financed by both the state and international donors that are active and specialized in providing services for survivors of GBV (at both the national and local level) including women's shelters, adequate medical facilities and facilities which provide psycho-social support.	https://eca.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2023/07/prioritizing-womens-needs-through-local-gender-responsive-budgeting-in-serbia#:~:text=UN%20Women%2C%20under%20a%20project,to%20introduce%20GRB%20since%202015.	UNW

shelters, adequate medical facilities and facilities which provide psycho-social support?				
Is the country currently experiencing war, internal conflict or humanitarian disaster?	National / Media	No		
Project Level Risks	Responsibility	Comments		
Are women concentrated in lower paid roles and mostly line-managed and supervised by men?	AE	Yes. In Serbia, women's wages are lower than men's even in professions where women make up the majority of the workforce, such as in the health care and welfare system. The wage gap between women and men is 8.8%	https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/wage-gap-between-women-and-men-in-serbia-is-8-8-in-favour-of-men/	Academia
Are piece-rate systems or other performance-related pay structures used where individuals are in control of how much other workers get paid?	AE	No		
Will project workers have control over life-changing resources such as the allocation of compensation for displacement or access to basic or	AE	Project workers will not be displaced. All workers will be selected within a radius of 25 miles from the worksite.		

highly sought-after resources?				
Will security personnel be used? Will they be armed?	AE	No, the project will not employ armed security personnel.		
Will there be an influx of male workers into the project area (as opposed to only using local labour)?	AE	All workers in project areas (see selection criteria of activities) will be selected among men and women within a 25 km radius. Therefore, there will be no influx of male workers in project areas. Furthermore, project activities will be in remote forested areas generally far from houses and communities.		
Are local communities poor and lacking basic resources?	AE	Although poverty rate is higher in rural areas, local communities, by large, do not lack basic resources.		
Will migrant workers be employed by the project, especially those who may not speak the local language? Will they be employed on a temporary or daily basis?	AE	Hiring of workers will be made following the laws and regulations of the Republic of Serbia and workers will need to abide with the FAO code of conduct and FAO policies. As works will occur in remote forested areas of the country, the project does not expect to have migrant workers.		
Will project workers all have formal contracts?		Yes, hiring of workers will be made following the laws and regulations of the Republic of Serbia (Labor Law 24/05, 61/05 and 54/09). These regulate contracts, wages all the other aspects related to labour. Workers will need to abide with the FAO code of conduct and FAO policies.		
Will goods frequently be transported over long distances, especially through poor and/or remote communities?	AE	No, the project will not require transport of good, people or materials over long distances.		

Are worksites or project activities based in remote locations? Will worksites be spread out, with isolated spaces?	AE	Worksites will be in remoted forest and rural areas of the country. Nonetheless, as workers will be selected from communities within a radius of 25 km from the worksite, these will not require the establishment of camps or other temporary accommodation structures.		
Will project workers live in the community or in worker housing? If in worker housing, is it mixed sex?	AE	As workers will be selected from communities within a radius of 25 km from the worksite, these will not require the establishment of camps or other temporary accommodation structures.		
Will workers be required to travel long and potentially unsafe distances, and at times of day when transport options may be limited?	AE	Workers will be selected from communities within a radius of 25 km from the worksite. Based on the criteria identified in the FFP, worksite must be accessible by road. Furthermore, transport from collection points in accessible areas to worksites will be guaranteed by the project through its partners and service providers.		
Will the project operate in highly pressurized work environments, with tight seasonal deadlines?	AE	The project will work with tight seasonal deadlines, but it will not be in highly pressurized work environments.		
Is the project located within a male-dominated sector where female workers will be employed?	AE	Forestry is a sector where women employment does not go above 14%. Nonetheless, employment will be open and accessible to all without any gender restriction.		
Have communities, especially low income/ vulnerable	AE	Participation in the project is voluntary and involves both state owned forests and forest owned by municipalities and private operators.		

communities, voluntarily raised concerns in relation to SEAH/GBV during consultations?		Therefore, the project will assess SEAH/GBV during final identification of forestry investment sites.		
Have any changes been made to project design or adaptive management undertaken due to concerns of stakeholders and communities? (If yes, work through this checklist again)	AE	No, stakeholders have not raised concerns.		

ANNEX 2. PSEA RISK MITIGATION MATRIX

Description of [Potential] Risks	Likelihood (LMH)	Potential Impact (LMH)	Risk Mitigation Measures
Contextual Risks			
National Level Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of strong legal system to enforce laws • Low levels of prosecution of SEAH incidents 	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure presence in the PMU of a gender and social expert with extensive experience of local context. • Ensure constant coordination between the project gender and social expert, the National Gender Coordinator, and the Regional Gender Coordinator in FAO. • Work with relevant gender/social welfare Government ministries and departments, other anti-gender-based violence organizations or networks. • Strong enforcement of the AEs SEAH (and/or its equivalent) policy. • Enforcement of SEAH related laws as it pertains to the project/program. • Liaise institutional stakeholders with providers of SEAH training (e.g. UNFPA, UNWOMEN, UNIVEF, OCHA among others) to project stakeholders and communities.
Societal Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociocultural norms that do not challenge SEAH • Low levels of awareness on rights, SEAH etc. • Limited services for SEAH survivors 	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular visits to communities and local institutions of the gender and social expert to work with local government or authorities and to sensitize community members on SEAH safeguarding. • Identify champions where applicable to act as allies on SEAH safeguarding. • Provide SEAH training to project stakeholders and communities.
Project Risks			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited SEAH protection services in project/program area • High rates of femicide or sexual violence (e.g., used as a tactic of war) in project/program areas • Women fear that participation or employment in the project/program may exacerbate ongoing forms of SEAH. 	L	L	<p>As above societal risks and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the work of the Gender and Social expert of the project, support local officials in campaigns on prevention of SEAH; • Leverage existing relationships with government stakeholders; identify champions / supporters / changemakers within the government (specifically on SEAH). • Conduct SEAH awareness-raising and sensitization campaigns within the community. • Inform the community the community on SEAH risks, explain how to report them and the services available including SEAH GRM established by the project.