



# DIGITALIZATION AND ICT

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING GUIDANCE



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REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA





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Authors: Agustela Nini-Pavli, Ani Plaku, Katherine Belen, Dolly Wittberger

Proofreading: Monika Kocaqi, Dolly Wittberger

Layout and Design: Erald Lamja

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADISA	Agency for Development of Integrated Services
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoM	council of ministers
COVID-19	severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)
EC	European Commission
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
Eurostat	the statistical office of the European Union
EU4GE	EU for Gender Equality
FPI-RF	Foreign Policy Instruments Result Framework
GDP	gross domestic product
GAP	gender action plan
GENDERNET	OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH
GRB	gender-responsive budgeting
GRPP	gender-responsive public procurement
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSTAT	Albanian Institute for Statistics
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IT	information technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LFS	labour force survey
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NSGE	national strategy for gender equality
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee

SANECA	Support to Accession Negotiations for Albania in Economic Chapters of Acquis
SES	structure of earnings survey
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UN SCR 1325	United Nations Council Resolution 1325 'Women Peace and Security'
UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US\$	United States Dollar
VAWG	violence against women and girls

# INTRODUCTION

This gender mainstreaming Guidance is part of a series of resources made available through the EU's and UN Women's technical support to the Government of Albania for accelerating the process of EU integration. Its aim is to ensure that future policy, planning, and programming documents align more closely with the EU legal and policy framework on gender equality (the 'Gender Equality *acquis*'), and thus enhance equality outcomes for all women, men, girls, and boys in the country. It is addressed to development and integration partners involved in policy, programming, and planning initiatives in the EU accession context. This group includes primarily government staff developing policies and drafting IPA programmes, experts providing technical assistance, EU Delegation Task Managers, donors and international development partners supporting EU-aligned reform, and civil society organizations engaged in accountability and consultative processes. The purpose of this Guidance is to provide succinct information on the key gender issues in a particular policy area, and to show how gender mainstreaming can be done in practical terms. The Guidance document is envisaged as an initial primer. It can be used as reference document in individuals' daily work, and it also serves as training material in efforts to establish gender mainstreaming capacity and skills.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the European Union. The right of women to equal treatment is, above all, a fundamental human right. EU Law recognizes discrimination as politically unacceptable, economically unprofitable, and punishable by law. For this reason, countries are required to comply with the *acquis* on gender equality and non-discrimination when acceding to the EU. As defined by EU Law, the strategy for promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination, is gender mainstreaming. Consequently, gender mainstreaming is a prerequisite for aligning national standards with the EU principles and an integral element of ensuing reform processes.

Digital technology is essential to people's lives, with over 90 per cent of jobs worldwide having a digital component, and many will soon be requiring sophisticated digital skills.<sup>1</sup> The EU's '2030 Digital Compass' is a strategy to ensure that digital technologies are used equally by all citizens to stimulate

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1 Plan International, 'Bridging the Gender Digital Divide' [Online]. See: <https://plan-international.org/quality-education/bridging-the-digital-divide/>, as cited in ITU and UN WOMEN (2021), Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries, see: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/3/digitally-empowered-generation-equality-women-girls-and-ict-in-the-context-of-covid-19>



sustainable economic growth and, at the same time, address social challenges.<sup>2</sup> The strategy explicitly acknowledges inequalities between women and men in benefitting from digital space as well as in accessing digital services (the ‘digital gender divide’), and aims at convergence.

Women’s social and economic rights, citizenship, and empowerment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be realized without women’s equal and meaningful engagement in digitalization and the ICT sector.<sup>3</sup> Towards this end, mainstreaming gender equality goals in the digital sector is key for closing the gap by creating favorable conditions and increasing participation of women and girls in the digital economy and society.<sup>4</sup> Structured in five brief sections, the Gender Mainstreaming Guidance on Digitalization and ICT supports stakeholders to:

- understand gender inequality issues in digitalization and ICT;
- learn about relevant EU policy recommendations and Directives;
- identify relevant indicators for mainstreaming gender in the digital agenda and ICT sector;
- know about standardized EU methods and tools to mainstream gender equality goals;
- engage in concrete follow-up, based on a succinct list of key recommended actions.

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2 European Commission (2021). COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. COM(2021) 118 final. 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0118>

3 ITU and UN WOMEN (2016). Action Plan to Close the Digital Gender Gap. Available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/action/gender-equality/Documents/ActionPlan.pdf>

4 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017). Gender and Digital Agenda. See: [https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/ti\\_pubpdf\\_mh0216896enn\\_pdfweb\\_20170124121443.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/ti_pubpdf_mh0216896enn_pdfweb_20170124121443.pdf), p.8.

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## Gender Equality is not just about 'women'.

Rather it is about the different realities and needs of women and men across society; and the recognition that these realities and needs should be valued and - importantly - nurtured.

This necessitates ensuring that all people are empowered to take a full and productive role in the family, community, society, and the economy. To be in control of their own lives, to make the choices they wish, and thus have fair and equal access to services, support, and opportunity.

Gender-responsive governance is therefore about making sure that in all its policies, programmes, activities, priorities, and budgets, government takes into account the different needs and concerns of women and men, and addresses and reduces inequalities between them.

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“Today worldwide some 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone and can access the mobile Internet. Women are under-represented in ICT jobs, top management and academic careers, and men are four times more likely than women to be ICT specialists. At 15 years of age, on average, only 0.5% of girls wish to become ICT professionals, compared to 5% of boys. Women-owned start-ups receive 23% less funding and are 30% less likely to have a positive exit compared to male-owned businesses. [...]

Digital technologies provide new opportunities to make progress, but technological fixes cannot address the underlying structural problems that drive the digital gender divide. [...]

Concrete policy actions are needed to foster women's and girls' full participation and inclusion in the digital economy, while at the same time addressing stereotypes and social norms that lead to discrimination against women. The digital gender divide needs to be resolved. [...]

There is no reason for women to trail behind in the digital transformation. Bridging the gender divide, also in the digital world, can provide new sources of global economic growth, support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and help achieve the [...] goal of strong, sustainable and inclusive growth.”

Source: OECD (2018). Bridging the digital gender divide: include, upskill, innovate.  
See: <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

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# 1

## DIGITALIZATION AND ICT - KEY GENDER ISSUES IN ALBANIA

According to the latest ITU data, 72.2 per cent of people in Albania used the Internet in 2020. This result is below the European region average of 84.9 per cent. The number of Internet users is steadily increasing, with an annual increase by 3.3 percentage points over the past three years.<sup>5</sup> While connectivity is the backbone of digital transformation, adopting a people-centric digital transformation is vital to ensure that all members of society are not only connected but meaningfully and effectively connected and, thus, can access and fully enjoy the benefits of an ever-growing digital world. However, the benefits of the digital transformation are currently not equally enjoyed by all women and men, or across societal groups. Access, use, and ownership of digital equipment and tools follow gendered patterns. The term 'digital gender divide' refers to the inequalities between women/girls and men/boys in resources and capabilities to access and effectively utilize ICTs.<sup>6</sup> This section provides an overview of the main gender inequality issues in the policy area that need to be addressed.

**Two thirds of students in higher education are girls, but the number of girls pursuing technology-related subjects is very low.** Fields of studies in higher education remain highly gender segregated. Despite significantly higher numbers of women (59.3 per cent) in higher education than men (40.7 per cent), women are more represented in the humanities than in scientific fields.<sup>7</sup> In tertiary education, only 4.7 per cent of registered women students pursue ICT-related studies, compared to 11.9 per cent of registered male students.<sup>8</sup> The share of women ICT-students has not increased since 2018 and remains significantly below the EU average of 17 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Socio-cultural gender stereotypes keep typecasting girls for jobs considered 'nurturing', such as teaching, nursing or social work, and have a discouraging effect on girls who aim at pursuing studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). However, employment in science- and technology-related jobs would provide women with more equal access to jobs with higher wages.

5 ITU (2022). Digital Development Country Profile - Albania. See: [https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Publications/2022/Digital%20Development/Digital%20Development%20Country%20Profile\\_Albania\\_final\\_02.22.pdf](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Publications/2022/Digital%20Development/Digital%20Development%20Country%20Profile_Albania_final_02.22.pdf)

6 UN Women (2005) cited in OECD (2018). Bridging the digital gender divide: include, upskill, innovate. See: <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

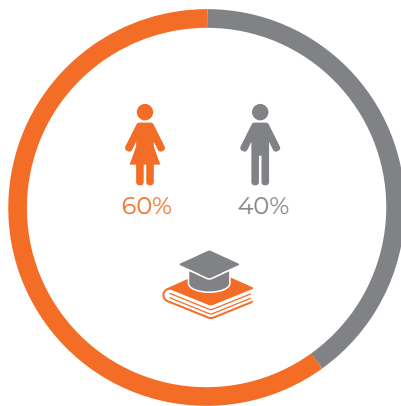
7 INSTAT (2022). Men and Women in Albania 2022, p.60. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11027/burra-dhe-gra-2022.pdf>

8 Data provided by INSTAT on 'Enrolled students in ICT field of study (2018-2022)', generated via the INSTAT Statistical Database in PC-Axis format.

9 Eurostat (2020). Girls and women among ICT students: what do we know? See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20200423-1>

## FIGURE 1

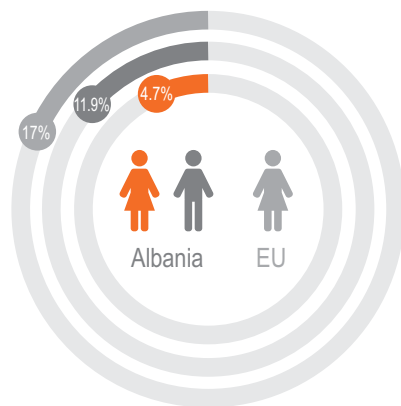
Share of girls and boys in higher education



Source: INSTAT (2022), Men and Women in Albania 2022.

## FIGURE 2

Share of girls and boys pursuing ICT-related studies



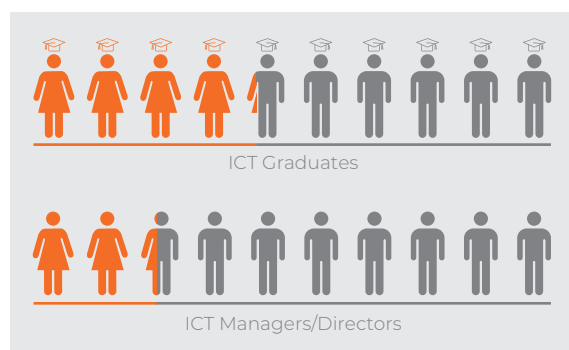
Source: Data provided by INSTAT on 'Enrolled students in ICT field of study (2018-2022)'; and Eurostat (2020), Girls and women among ICT students: what do we know?

**Gender segregation in education is mirrored in the labor market.** Channeling girls into fields of studies that are considered more 'feminine' results in a severe lack of female role models in STEM and ICT. In addition, the lack of women in science and technology reinforces gender-biased ideas about femininity and masculinity, and the roles of women and men within society. Despite the high demand for digital professionals, there is a shortage of women applying for these jobs.

**While a large share among those who graduate from ICT-related studies is women, the vast majority of management positions in this sector is held by men.** In 2020, women comprised more than 40 per cent of university graduates in STEM-related fields.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, figures for 2022 show a relatively high share of women graduates from ICT-related studies: 41.8 per cent women and 58.2 per cent men.<sup>11</sup> However, for women ICT graduates, educational attainment does not necessarily result in employment and career development opportunities in this sector: the share of women occupying higher positions in ICT industries, such as serving as high-level managers or directors, is disproportionately low at 26 per cent.<sup>12</sup> In addition to biased recruitment practices, data indicate the existence of a ‘glass ceiling’, referring to impediments and invisible barriers that militate against women’s access to decision-making and managerial positions in organizations.

### FIGURE 3

Share of women and men graduates in ICT-related studies versus career outcomes in ICT industries



Source: INSTAT data.

**The male-dominated ICT workplace culture is a key barrier to more women getting into, remaining, and advancing in ICT jobs.** In addition to being responsible for the major share of care-providing obligations in the family,

<sup>10</sup> ITU and UN WOMEN (2021). Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries. See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/3/digitally-empowered-generation-equality-women-girls-and-ict-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

<sup>11</sup> INSTAT data ‘Graduated students in ICT field of study by level of programme, 2022’.

<sup>12</sup> INSTAT calculations ‘Employed contributors as high level managers or directors in ICT sectors in 2020 and 2021’, based on General Directorate of Taxation data on ‘Social insurance contributors’.

women face challenges ranging from “feeling isolated” to “being subjected to sexualized comments that diminish you as a professional”. As a former IT-manager noted, in Albania, “women need to work twice as hard to be taken seriously and respected”<sup>13</sup>, further exacerbating the pressure on women in the sector. As a result, women’s representation - particularly in high-quality jobs and top management positions - remains low.

**Socio-cultural gender norms inhibit women’s and girls’ acquisition of technical skills, and digital access and use.** Some gender norms hold that computer science is “not an appropriate domain for girls”; or that girls who are good in mathematics and science are “thinking like a boy”.<sup>14</sup> Digital spaces magnify traditional norms of femininity and masculinity, which has consequences on how female and male youth engage online.<sup>15</sup> Especially for women and girls, this has led to digital platforms becoming spaces of self-monitoring and compliance with gender stereotypes and male standards (such as to be beautiful, slim, young, attractive), while young men are regularly exposed to media that objectifies women and tolerates aggression towards them. Also young men who do not conform to the ideal of traditional masculinity promoted online face pressure and risk being mocked by their friends.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, digitalization shapes adolescent girls’ and boys’ views and behavior around sexual relations and how young people should interact with each other. For example, cases abound of girls being threatened with a break-up or physical violence, if they refuse to send nude pictures of themselves.<sup>17</sup>

**Gender norms and biases impact on girls’ self-confidence about their IT-skills.** EU data show that more than nine in ten girls and boys aged 16-24 are sufficiently skilled to use digital technologies in their daily lives. However, boys were found to feel far more confident about their digital skills than girls.<sup>18</sup>

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13 ITU and UN WOMEN (2021). Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries. See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/3/digitally-empowered-generation-equality-women-girls-and-ict-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

14 *Ibid.*

15 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018). Gender and Youth: Opportunities and Risk of Digitalisation. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-equality-and-youth-opportunities-and-risks-digitalisation>

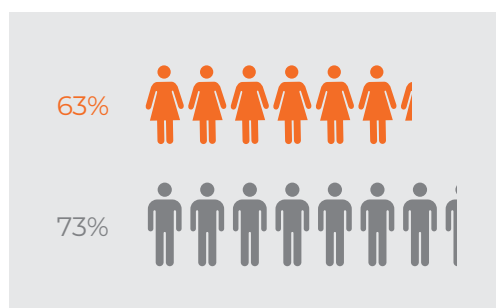
16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*

18 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018). Gender Equality and Digitalisation in the European Union. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-equality-and-digitalisation-european-union>

## FIGURE 4

### Digital confidence among girls and boys in EU countries



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), Gender Equality and Digitalisation in the European Union.

**Online and offline harassment prevent girls and women from full participation.**<sup>19</sup> Digital violence against women and girls (VAWG) is pervasive. The boost in ICT and digitalization has also enabled cybercriminals to abuse, harass, and harm women through the misuse of these technologies.<sup>20</sup> In an EU survey among 15-year-olds, a significantly larger share of girls (12 per cent) were found to have been cyber-bullied by messages at least once, compared to seven per cent of boys.<sup>21</sup> Most acts of violence remain undocumented and unchecked, with online aggression becoming increasingly accepted as 'normal' behavior. As a means of self-protection, especially girls and young women restrict what they express online or withdraw completely, because they "fear cyber-aggression, sexualized cyber-bullying, gossip, and hateful comments".<sup>22</sup>

**The number of women using the internet is growing, but gender gaps exist in more complex uses of the internet.** During the period 2018-2020, the number of women and men who had used the internet "during the past three months" increased significantly in Albania. This change was particularly pronounced for women, with an increase in 12.2 percentage points, which

19 ITU and UN WOMEN (2021). Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries. See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/3/digitally-empowered-generation-equality-women-girls-and-ict-in-the-context-of-covid-19>, p.3.

20 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017). Gender and Digital Agenda. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-and-digital-agenda>

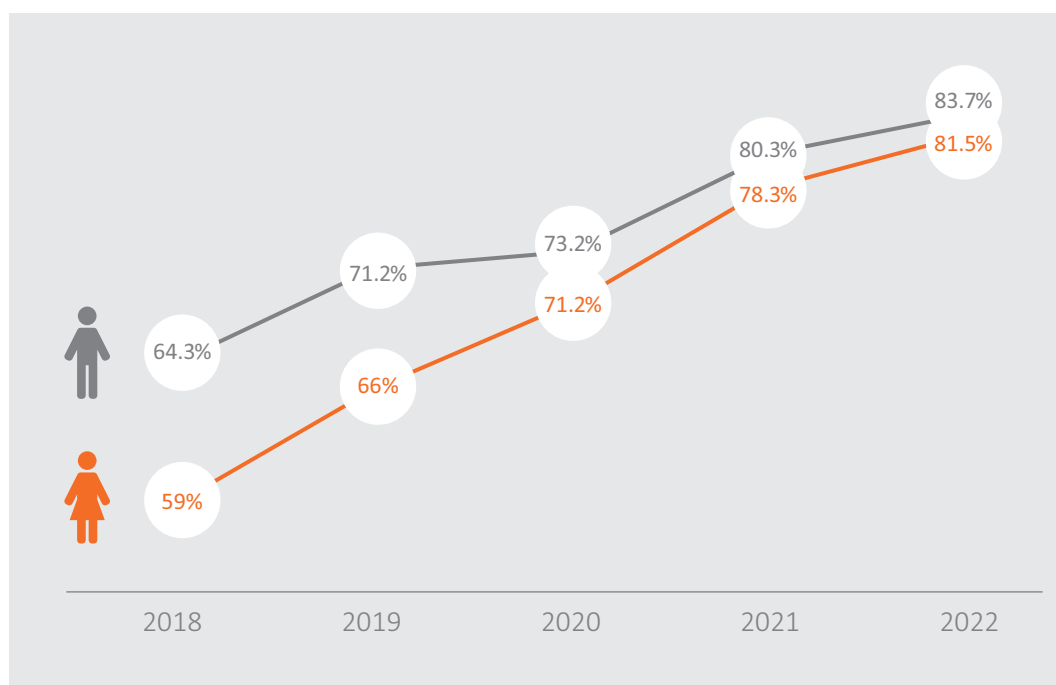
21 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018). Gender Equality and Digitalisation in the European Union. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-and-digitalisation-european-union>

22 *Ibid*, p.3.

is almost twice compared to the increase in men’s use of 6.9 percentage points.<sup>23</sup> Since then, the trend has levelled, and by 2022, 81.7 per cent of women and 83.5 per cent of men had used the internet “during the past three months”.<sup>24</sup> However, in general, more men compared to women were found to use the internet for accessing applications, resources, and services, such as downloading software content and using internet banking.<sup>25</sup>

## FIGURE 5

Share of women and men respondents who used the internet “during the past three months”



Source: INSTAT (2021, 2023), Surveys on ‘Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in Households and by Individuals’.

23 INSTAT (2021). Survey on ‘Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in Households and by Individuals’ in 2020. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/9330/ict-2021.pdf>

24 INSTAT (2023). Survey on ‘Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in Households and by Individuals’ in 2022. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11169/ict-2022-english.pdf>

25 Eurostat Statistics Explained [Online]. Digital economy and society statistics – households and individuals. See: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Digital\\_economy\\_and\\_society\\_statistics\\_-\\_households\\_and\\_individuals](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals), cited in European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2016), Gender and Digital Agenda, see: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-and-digital-agenda>



**Many women and girls own a mobile phone, but limitations to independent use persist.** A large share of women and men aged 15-59 own a mobile phone (89 and 94 per cent, respectively).<sup>26</sup> However, data indicates that even before the Covid-19-induced lockdown situation (i.e., confinement to private homes), women's and girls' mobile phone usage was frequently controlled by male family members.<sup>27</sup>

**Gaps in gender data on digitalization and ICT prevent addressing inequalities and gender-specific challenges.** Sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics are essential for understanding the situation of women and men in the sector. They are also key for conducting gender analysis, developing gender-responsive policies, and designing measures that address inequalities and gender-specific challenges. In principle, it would be possible to compute several key (gender) EU-indicators on digitalization and ICT in Albania, based on existing administrative data. (See Box 1).

## BOX 1

### Key policy area-specific EU indicators that could be computed in Albania

- Percentage of households with computer access at home
- Use and access by individual members within households in different geographical locations and among various socio-economic population segments
- Differences in digital skills among Albania's female and male population (gender skill gaps)
- Number of STEM graduates, disaggregated by sex
- Employment in STEM/ICT, disaggregated by sex
- Access to essential online services and transactions, disaggregated by sex
- Percentage of individuals using the internet to connect with public authorities in the past 12 months, by sex

26 INSTAT, Institute of Public Health, and ICF (2018). Albania Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18. Available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/5050/adhs-2017-18-pdf.pdf>

27 INSTAT (2020). Survey on 'Information and Communication Technologies usage in Households and by Individuals (ICT)'. Available at: [https://www.instat.gov.al/media/8266/ict-2020-english\\_.pdf](https://www.instat.gov.al/media/8266/ict-2020-english_.pdf)

A precondition for establishing these indicators is improved coordination between institutions. Data required for computing can be obtained from the annual household surveys conducted by INSTAT, the Government 'E-Albania'-portal, and through the Agency for Development of Integrated Services (ADISA). Data on gender differences in digital skills among Albania's population could be generated by establishing systematic data-exchange between the two aforementioned institutions and INSTAT. Furthermore, survey gender data related to studies on STEM- and ICT-related employment outcomes, including on digital entrepreneurship, could be provided by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES).

## BOX 2

### Summary of main gender inequality issues in Digitalization and ICT

- Unequal access to and use of digital technologies among women/girls and men/boys.
- Sex-segregation across fields of studies: girls are less likely to study technology-related subjects (STEM, ICT) compared to boys.
- Women's low participation in the digital labor market: fewer women earning an income and making a career in ICT.
- Violence against women, cyber-bullying, online harassment, and other forms of gender-based violence prevent women's and girls' participation.
- Online perpetuation of unequal gender roles and promotion of harmful gender norms.
- Gaps in administrative gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data, and inter-institutional coordination on establishing key gender indicators.

## 2 GENDER EQUALITY AND THE DIGITAL AGENDA IN THE EU ACCESSION CONTEXT

In the EU, the digital sector falls under the responsibility of both the European Commission and EU Member States. Member States are in charge of creating favorable conditions for the development of the digital economy, which includes ensuring women's and men's equal participation in the digital economy and society. The remit of the Commission is to create the Digital Single Market - one of ten political EU priorities. It is defined as a market for the free movement of people, services, and capital, where individuals and businesses can access and exercise online activities under conditions of fair competition, and with a high level of consumer and personal data protection, irrespective of their nationality or place of residence. Maximizing the growth potential of the digital economy is one of the pillars of the Digital Single Market strategy. Consequently, the European Commission has been taking action to encourage EU Member States to speed up the development of the digital economy, including initiatives to support Member States in enhancing digital skills and boosting women's participation in this sector. It is estimated that bringing an additional 600 million women and girls online globally will result in a GDP increase of up to US\$ 18 billion.<sup>28</sup>

Gender equality considerations play a key role in shaping the strategic directions in the sector. They determine who can participate in decisions regarding the digital world; they impact on the level of access women/girls and men/boys have to digital tools; and they delineate who can acquire skills and opportunities to participate in the digital economy and hence benefit from an enriched, accessible, and secure digital space with a full range of services. For women to earn an income, participate equally in governance processes, and innovate and shape the future, closing the digital gender divide is paramount. This can be achieved by increasing women's access to the internet and digital tools, providing women and girls with greater opportunities to study ICT subjects, and enhancing women's participation in the digital economy.<sup>29</sup> Addressing gender equality goals in the digital agenda and ICT positively impacts on economic growth and social development in the following ways:

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28 United Nations Broadband Commissions (2013). Doubling Digital Opportunities: Enhancing the Inclusion of Women and Girls in the Information Society. See: [https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WGGender\\_Report2013.pdf](https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WGGender_Report2013.pdf)

29 *Ibid.*

## TABLE 1

Benefits of addressing gender equality goals in the digital agenda and ICT<sup>30</sup>

Economic Growth	Social Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Access to broadband boosts the knowledge economy, which relies on women's and men's intellectual resources or expertise, and underpins national and EU development.</li><li>▪ Increasing women's employment in the ICT sector helps narrow the gender pay gap - it is one of the highest paying sectors, and women in ICT are better-paid compared to women in other professions.</li><li>▪ Mobile money accounts offer an effective way to boost women's financial inclusion.</li><li>▪ Narrowing the gender gap in STEM education would lead to economic growth, with more jobs (up to 1.2 million by 2050) and increased GDP over the long-term (up to EUR 820 billion by 2050).</li><li>▪ Having more women in ICT/digital jobs can address the huge workforce shortage in the sector.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Access to modern ICT and the internet enables access to information and the exercise of human rights (e.g., freedom of expression), and promotes the right to participate and engage in policy- and decision-making processes.</li><li>▪ ICT use enables women to acquire new skills and contributes to women's employment, economic independence, and the sustainable development of their livelihoods.</li><li>▪ ICT can catalyze public service delivery; thus, it can support women's access to education and other public services.</li><li>▪ Accessing productive resources and services online reduces women's and girls' dependency on intermediaries or middlemen.</li><li>▪ Digital jobs can offer an opportunity for better work-life balance.</li></ul>

<sup>30</sup> Based on the following sources: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), Gender and Digital Agenda; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), Gender Equality and Digitalisation in the European Union; OECD (2018), Bridging the digital gender divide: include, upskill, innovate; and ITU and UN WOMEN (2021), Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries.

In many parts of the World, ICTs are increasingly used to promote gender equality and particularly to help prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG). For example, virtual reality tools are used to train law enforcement agents on gender-sensitive codes of conduct. In Albania, Serbia, and Montenegro, mobile applications (apps) have been developed and tested that aid survivors of domestic violence to access information and support services. In addition to providing useful information, these apps can provide an instant, discreet, and confidential way to seek help—whether from trusted contacts or local or national helplines.<sup>31</sup> Thus, also from the perspective of addressing the issue of VAWG, it is important to increase women’s participation in the digital world and enhance women’s versatility in using digital technologies, so they can access the full range of available products, services, and platforms.<sup>32</sup>

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31 ITU and UN WOMEN (2021). Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries. See: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/3/digitally-empowered-generation-equality-women-girls-and-ict-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

32 *Ibid.*

# 3 LINKING DIGITALIZATION AND ICT WITH THE EU GENDER EQUALITY ACQUIS

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**Gender mainstreaming** is a strategy which involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, budgets, spending programmes, project activities, regulatory measures, administrative functions, and institutional culture, with a view to promoting **equality between women and men**, and preventing and eliminating discrimination.

Gender mainstreaming ensures that policy-making and legislative work are of higher quality, and policies respond more effectively to the needs of all citizens – women and men, girls and boys. With gender mainstreaming, public interventions are more effective, ensuring that inequalities are not perpetuated.

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The main objective of EU programmes in (pre-)accession countries is to support potential Member States to adopt and implement all reforms (political, institutional, legal, administrative, social, and economic) that are required to comply with EU values and align with EU rules, standards, policies, and practices. The accession criteria (Copenhagen Criteria) include clear preconditions for stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.<sup>33</sup> Gender equality - as one of the key rule-of-law principles - forms an inherent part of the Enlargement Strategy.<sup>34</sup> Enlargement requires each accession country to adopt the body of common rights and obligations (EU *acquis*) that are binding for all EU member countries.<sup>35</sup> Gender equality is integral to accession and legal harmonization processes by applying the rights-based approach principles of (i) legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; (ii) participation; (iii) non-discrimination; (iv) accountability; and (v) transparency in each step of programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU-support.

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33 Conclusions of the Presidency, European Council, Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21225/72921.pdf>

34 European Commission (2018). COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, 2018, p.4. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0065>

35 EUR-Lex. Glossary of summaries [Online]. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/acquis.html>

**At EU-level**, the obligation to engage in gender mainstreaming emanates, among others, from:

- the Treaty of the European Union (TEU)<sup>36</sup>;
- the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)<sup>37</sup> Articles 8 and 10, which mandate the EU and Member States to ensure gender equality goals are mainstreamed in all EU activities;
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004<sup>38</sup>, 'Implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services';
- the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006<sup>39</sup> 'On the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation' (Recast Directive).

Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is clearly reflected in the EU Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025)<sup>40</sup>, and it is integral part of the Regulations of the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)<sup>41</sup>: **when accessing the EU, candidate countries are required to comply with the *acquis* on gender equality and non-discrimination.**

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36 Consolidated version of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU). See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>

37 Consolidated version of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

38 Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004, 'Implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services'. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32004L0113>

39 DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006, 'On the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation' (Recast Directive). See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0054>

40 Joint Communication of the European Parliament and the Council: EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action. See: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf); EU GAP III is fully aligned with international instruments such as: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); and UN Council Resolution 1325 'Women Peace and Security' (UNSCR 1325).

41 REGULATION (EU) 2021/947 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No.480/2009. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0947&from=EN>

**At the international level**, Albania has ratified essential international treaties and/or endorsed policies obliging the country to safeguard women's rights and support gender equality, including:

- the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN CEDAW);<sup>42</sup>
- the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention);<sup>43</sup>
- the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA);<sup>44</sup>
- the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 'Women Peace and Security' (UNSCR 1325);<sup>45</sup> and
- the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Fundamental Conventions<sup>46</sup>, and C190 concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.<sup>47</sup>

EU Gender Law and EU GAP III are aligned with the abovementioned documents and hence constitute an integral part of the EU accession process.

**At national level**, the Albanian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender (Article 18/2).<sup>48</sup> Law No.9970, dated 24/07/2008, 'On Gender Equality in Society'<sup>49</sup> defines the term 'gender mainstreaming'. Law No.10221, dated 04/02/2010, 'On Protection from Discrimination', amended in 2020<sup>50</sup>,

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42 United Nations General Assembly (1979). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

43 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/basic-texts>

44 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995). See: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

45 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security (2000). See: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2000/10/un-security-council-resolution-1325>

46 ILO Conventions and Recommendations [Online]. See: <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>

47 ILO (2019). Convention No.190 concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. See: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C190](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190); see also: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/violence-harassment/lang--en/index.htm>

48 Constitution of the Republic of Albania. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/albania/41888>

49 Law No.9970, dated 24/07/2008, 'On gender equality in society', as published in the Official Gazette No.125, dated 01/08/2008. See: <http://www.osce.org/albania/36682>

50 As amended by the Law No.124/2020. See: <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Law-on-Protection-from-Discrimination-Albania.-2020.pdf>



obliges public authorities in their entirety to promote equality and prevent discrimination in exercising their functions (Article 7, Protection from discrimination). Furthermore, the law addresses structural and intersectional discrimination as well as the elimination of privilege.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021-2030, adopted through Council of Ministers' Decision No.400, dated 30/06/2021, through its Strategic Goal IV, establishes the "Application of gender mainstreaming as the main tool of achieving gender equality and gender justice in society".<sup>51</sup> It foresees monitoring of new strategies that integrate a gender perspective, and the allocation of respectively matching budget allocations at central and municipal level. Thereby, the NSGE provides the strategic framework for gender mainstreaming across sectors and levels of governance.

### 3.1. Alignment with EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III and relevant indicators

As evidenced in documents such as Country Reports and Country Gender Profiles for Albania, significant gaps persist in addressing gender inequality issues and in the application of gender mainstreaming.<sup>52</sup> This includes policy areas in which women's unequal status is well-documented and clearly evidenced by administrative data. Underlying reasons include:

- (i) the stereotypical and erroneous conceptualization of a 'standard citizen' who is male;
- (ii) limited gender mainstreaming capacity and skills within the administration;
- (iii) absence of the obligation to conduct policy area-specific gender analysis on a routine basis; and
- (iv) weak reflection of gender equality norms and standards in processes, procedures, and systems of governance.

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51 National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030, published in the Official Gazette No.112, dated 15/07/2021. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2021/112>; the English version is available at: [https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/WEB\\_Strategjia%20Kombetare%20-%20EN.pdf](https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/WEB_Strategjia%20Kombetare%20-%20EN.pdf)

52 European Commission. EU Country Reports in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020; UN Women and UNDP (2016), Gender Brief Albania 2016, see: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/10/albania-gender-brief>; UN Women (2020), Country Gender Equality Brief Albania 2020, see: [https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Albania/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/CGEB%20Albania\\_REPORT\\_1.pdf](https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Albania/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/CGEB%20Albania_REPORT_1.pdf)

A further obstacle is posed by the fact that individuals involved in the drafting of policies and programmes find it difficult to precisely pinpoint the main gender inequality issues in their specific area of engagement. Consequently, the vast majority of policies, plans, and programmes remain without concrete gender equality objectives.

Public policies are expected to work for specific outcomes. Indicators outline the regulatory markers of achievement of these outcomes. With regard to monitoring progress on gender equality, the indicators of the EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III) serve as valuable guidance.<sup>53</sup> They illustrate what kind of change in the lives of women/girls and men/boys (i.e., outcomes) needs to be achieved and measured in a policy area.

In the EU GAP III, gender disparities in ITC feature primarily in the Thematic Area of “Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation”. The Overall Thematic Objective aims at an impact-level change wherein “Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, can equally participate in shaping the digital world of tomorrow”. Related Thematic Objectives further specify the dimensions in which progress needs to be achieved.

In the framework of Albania’s EU accession process, mainstreaming gender equality requires that EU GAP III objectives and indicators are gradually accommodated within the country’s policy framework. Towards this end, the below table presents the alignment between (i) the EU Chapters relevant for a particular policy area; (ii) the respective national policy documents which shall accommodate the EU gender equality considerations; and (iii) the specific GAP III objectives and indicators which need to be incorporated into national monitoring frameworks. The alignment is supplemented by listing the matching gender-related SDG Indicators, which links gender mainstreaming in the EU accession process to gender equality goals at global level.

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<sup>53</sup> European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2020). Joint Staff Working Document. Objectives and Indicators to Frame the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-25), p.27. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0284>

## TABLE 2

Alignment of Chapter 20 and Chapter 25 with EU GAP III Indicators

Chapter 20 – Enterprise and Industrial Policy Chapter 25 – Education	
<b>Related national strategic documents</b>	<p>Business and Investment Development Strategy 2021–2027 and its Action Plan</p> <p>Economic Reform Programme 2023-2025</p> <p>National Plan for Sustainable Development of Digital Infrastructure, Broadband 2020-2025</p> <p>Inter-sectorial Strategy ‘Albania’s digital Agenda’ and Action Plan 2022-2026</p> <p>S3 Smart Specialization Strategy in Albania</p> <p>National Strategy on Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2023-2030</p> <p>National Strategy on Employment and Skills 2023-2030</p> <p>National Strategy on Education 2021-2026 and its Action Plan</p>
<b>Related EU GAP III Overall Thematic Objective</b>	<b>Women, men, girls, and boys, in all their diversity, can equally participate in shaping the digital world of tomorrow</b>
<b>Related EU GAP III Thematic Objectives</b>	<p>Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, participate equally in policy- and decision-making for the digital world, on local, national, regional and international levels, and are represented in these policies and decisions</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity have equal access to affordable and secure broadband, technology and digital tools</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys are equally provided with and using equally public digital literacy</p> <p>Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity participate fully and equally in the digital economy</p>

	<p>Increased access for women in all their diversity to decent work in non-traditional, in particular science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and female-dominated sectors, including women's transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems</p>
<p><b>Related EU GAP III Indicators</b></p>	<p>Number of government programmes implemented to improve women's ability to benefit from employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, offered by the digital transformation</p> <p>Number of relevant actors (private sector companies, ministries, etc.) influenced to adopt processes to improve women's economic empowerment / to remove barriers to market access for women in a given sector (FPI RF)</p> <p>Number of practices aimed at removing barriers preventing women from market access, investment and business development (FPI RF)</p> <p>Number of digital start-up enterprises led by women who benefit from financial support and/or training</p> <p>Number of women accessing services or programme offered by the digital hubs/tech parks, etc.</p> <p>Number of women nominated to top management positions in digital technology</p> <p>% of girls having access to and using distance digital learning tools during crises such as the one caused by COVID-19</p> <p>Number of women, men, girls, and boys participating in digital hackathons or other digital start-ups events, disaggregated at least by sex</p>
<p><b>Gender-related SDG Indicators</b></p>	<p>Proportion of young people and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill (SDG Indicator 4.4.1) [sex-disaggregation foreseen]</p> <p>Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, disaggregated at least by sex (SDG Indicator 5.b.1)</p>

### 3.2. Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III: gender mainstreaming as per the ‘NDICI Regulations’

Albania’s reform and accession agenda receives significant financial support through EU funding as well as from EU Member States directly. The EU as primary promoter of equality between women and men in the region has set clear standards, explicitly defined in the European Commission’s ‘Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument’ (NDICI) Regulations, adopted in June 2021.<sup>54</sup> These Regulations apply to EU IPA III actions to be funded and implemented in Albania, and they are explicit on the gender equality requirements:

“[...] Strengthening gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Union’s external action and increasing efforts to reach the minimum standards of performance indicated by the EU Gender Action Plans should lead to a gender sensitive and transformative approach in all Union external action and international cooperation. At least 85% of new actions implemented under the Instrument should have gender equality as a principal or a significant objective, as defined by the gender equality policy marker of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. At least 5% of those actions should have gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment as a principal objective.”<sup>55</sup>

In light of the EU NDICI Regulations, which foresee the target of 85 per cent gender-sensitive actions in the future, the Government of Albania needs to define – in concrete terms – the activities, structures, mechanisms, and capacities for implementing gender-sensitive actions as a requirement and precondition for successfully absorbing EU IPA III funds.

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54 REGULATION (EU) 2021/947 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No.466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No.480/2009. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0947&from=EN>

55 *Ibid.*, L209/8(44).

### 3.3. The OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker

The OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker<sup>56</sup> is a key monitoring and accountability tool in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Its aim is to identify gaps between legal, policy, and financial commitments, and incentivize efforts to close them. Undertaking a gender analysis and pursuing a 'do-no-harm' approach are obligatory for all programs/actions.

Programs/actions that have been screened against the marker, but not found to target gender equality, are classified Score 0. Such a score requires narrative justification. Programs/actions with gender equality as an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the program/action, are classified Score 1. Programs/actions with gender equality as the main objective, and fundamental in design and results, are classified Score 2.

The EU NDICI Regulations - which apply to, for example, IPA III Action Documents - make explicit reference to the obligatory application of the common minimum criteria for the three categories of the OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker. They set a target of 85 per cent of all actions classified at least as Score 1, with 5 per cent qualified as Score 2. In practice, a Score 1 classification requires gender responsiveness to be reflected at the level of problem analysis, objectives, indicators, and targets.

#### Score 1 Definition:

- Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.
- The gender equality objective must be explicit in the project/programme documentation and cannot be implicit or assumed.
- The project/programme, in addition to other objectives, is designed to have a positive impact on advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.

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<sup>56</sup> OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) (2016). Definition and minimum recommended criteria for the DAC gender equality policy marker. See: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Minimum-recommended-criteria-for-DAC-gender-marker.pdf>

### TABLE 3

Minimum requirements for meeting OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker Score 1 criteria

Level	Requirement	Check	Action to be taken to get there
<b>Problem analysis</b>	An analysis of the status, role, position and situation of women/girls and men/boys in relation to the policy area/sector/sub-sector, in which the project/programme/action is embedded, has been conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whenever the gender analysis is inexistent, incomplete, or outdated, commission/undertake a sector- or sub-sector specific gender analysis
	Findings from the gender analysis:		
	- are included in the problem description	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	- are substantiated with numbers (gender statistics)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	- have informed the design of the project/programme/action	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	The main gender inequality issues specific for the policy area/sector/sub-sector are mentioned	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	The intervention adopts a “do no harm” approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex and further identity markers, where relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Objectives</b>	Presence of at least one explicit gender equality objective (e.g., explicitly aiming at achieving gender equality goals), in line with the gender inequality issues described in the narrative analysis	□	Make gender mainstreaming expertise an integral part of working groups that draft/review documents
<b>Activities</b>	Proposed activities specifically respond to the described situation of women/girls and men/boys, contribute to achieving gender equality outcomes, and prevent discrimination including structural and intersectional discrimination	□	Make gender mainstreaming expertise an integral part of working groups that draft/review documents
<b>Indicators</b>	Any gender equality objective formulated is backed by at least one gender-sensitive indicator, enabling the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identification of gender gaps in benefiting from measures</li> <li>- monitoring of the impact of measures/activities on women/girls and men/boys</li> </ul>	□	Align with relevant EU and global indicators (such as SDGs, Eurostat/EU GAP III, and similar)
<b>Targets</b>	Specific values for women/girls and men/boys are set	□	Reflect the aim to close gender gaps/achieve gender equality outcomes when setting target values



The OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker Score 2 classification requires that gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and fundamental in its design and expected results. Until now, the number and scope of EU IPA-funded actions that classify as Score 2 has remained very low.

**Score 2 Definition:**

- Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.
- The project/programme is designed with the principal intention of advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.

# 4 MAIN TOOLS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This section contains a selection of EU standardized gender mainstreaming tools to be applied in policy revision, strategic planning of line Ministries, programming, budgeting, and similar governance processes. The complete collection of EU standardized toolkits and materials, including elaborate descriptions of specific gender mainstreaming tools, is available on the website of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), accessible at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools>

## 4.1. Gender analysis<sup>57</sup>

Gender analysis provides the necessary data and information to integrate a gender perspective into policies, programmes, and projects. As a starting point for gender mainstreaming, gender analysis identifies the differences between and among women/girls and men/boys in terms of their relative position in society, and the distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power in a given context. In this way, conducting a gender analysis allows for the subsequent development of interventions that adequately address gender inequalities and meet the different needs of women/girls and men/boys. The purpose of gender analysis is to identify and address gender inequalities by:

- acknowledging differences between and among women/girls and men/boys, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power,
- ensuring that the different needs of women/girls and men/boys are clearly identified and addressed at all stages of the policy cycle,
- recognizing that policies, programmes, and projects can have different effects on women/girls and men/boys,
- seeking and articulating the viewpoints of women/girls and men/boys and making their contribution a critical part of developing policies, programmes, and projects,
- promoting women's participation and engagement in community, political, and economic life, and
- supporting better informed, gender-responsive, and effective interventions.

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<sup>57</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming - More Tools and Methods: Gender analysis. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis#:~:text=As%20a%20starting%20point%20for,power%20in%20a%20given%20context>

Gender analysis includes consideration of women's particular experiences, roles, and responsibilities, and their level of access to resources and decision-making. Gender analysis also involves acknowledging the historical and social inequalities faced by women/girls, and aims to inform the design of policies, programmes, and projects to address - and to remedy - these inequalities.

A thorough gender analysis enables policymakers to understand gender inequalities in a given situation or sector: it describes the current state of contextual situations by gender, and also explores the causes and effects of gender disparities on the target group. Looking at the underlying causes of gender inequalities and discrimination assists in setting relevant and targeted objectives and measures to eliminate gender inequalities. In this way, gender analysis contributes to the improved gender-responsiveness of policies and legislation, as it provides the basis for ensuring that the needs of all citizens — women, men, girls, and boys — are adequately addressed.

## 4.2. Gender statistics on digitalization and ICT in the Albanian context

Gender statistics describe or measure gender inequalities. They rely on data on individuals broken down by sex, i.e., collected and tabulated separately for women/girls and men/boys. These sex-disaggregated data reflect the realities of the lives of women/girls and men/boys, and the policy issues relating to gender. They allow for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions and are one of the requirements for obtaining gender statistics. For monitoring actual progress in gender equality, the concepts, definitions, and methods used in data production and analysis need to be designed in a way that they reflect gender roles, relations, and inequalities in society.<sup>58</sup>

In Albania, gender statistics are published annually in INSTAT's dedicated publication entitled 'Women and Men in Albania'.<sup>59</sup> Its main objective is to make available sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics for the purpose of monitoring cross-sectorial policies with regard to achieving gender equality

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58 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming - More Tools and Methods: Sex-disaggregated data. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/sex-disaggregated-data#:~:text=Data%20collected%20and%20tabulated%20separately,requirements%20in%20obtaining%20gender%20statistics>

59 See: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/gender-equality/#tab3>

goals and sustainable development objectives. The publication contains not only administrative data, but also data based on social surveys conducted by INSTAT at the household unit.

Since 2018, INSTAT has been conducting the annual ICT Survey. This statistical survey targets all individuals in the age-group 16 – 74, who reside in a household in Albania. The survey aims to collect data on ICT usage at the level of households and individuals, including household/individual ICT equipment (telephone, computer equipment, Internet access), and Internet use (e-commerce, e-government, etc.). The methodology and questionnaire are in line with Eurostat requirements<sup>60</sup>, and data processing and type of indicators are comparable with those of EU countries.

INSTAT's effort in aligning national gender statistics with Eurostat has been a continuous process and is ongoing. In 2021, INSTAT's database was restructured and aligned with Eurostat's methodology and database. All existing administrative data was assessed against Eurostat indicators, while for social surveys, indicators were produced based on a unified methodology. It is important to note that continuous alignment of statistics - including gender statistics - with EU standards is a requirement that goes beyond INSTAT. It concerns all data-producing institutions across sectors and levels of government.

Several EU GAP III indicators could be computed based on information obtained from surveys conducted by INSTAT (such as annual household surveys, LFS, SES), and through systematic data exchange between INSTAT, the Government 'E-Albania'-portal, and ADISA (see section 1).

### 4.3. Gender impact assessment

Gender impact assessment is an EU-standardized method routinely used for *ex-ante* evaluation of legal documents, strategic policy plans, and programmes under implementation.<sup>61</sup> Broader use of gender impact assessment helps

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60 Regulation (EC) No.808/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:143:0049:0055:EN:PDF>

61 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming - More Tools and Methods: Gender impact assessment. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment>

policymakers and public servants to analyze and foresee the impact on women/girls and men/boys of any important decision under consideration, which helps to improve existing measures and inform decisions regarding budget allocation. The findings of any gender impact assessment should be made available on time, so that legal regulations and related policies can be amended during the design and planning stages.

“Gender impact assessment can be applied to legislation, policy plans, policy programmes, budgets, concrete actions, bills and reports or calls for research. Gender impact assessment methods do not only have to be applied to policy in the making, they can also be applied to existing policies. They can be used in the administration as well as by external actors; in both cases they require a considerable amount of knowledge of gender issues.”<sup>62</sup>

In the framework of the GIZ-run SANECA Project, the standard EU *ex-ante* Gender Impact Assessment tool was recently adapted to the Albanian context, with special focus on mainstreaming gender equality goals into the so-called EU “Internal Market Chapters” (i.e., Chapters 1, 3, 20 and 28).<sup>63</sup> In Kosovo, the Agency for Gender Equality – operating under the Prime Minister’s Office - prepared a dedicated Gender Impact Assessment Manual in 2019, supported with funding from Sweden.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.4. Gender-responsive budgeting in digitalization and ICT

Gender-responsive budgeting is a key process to incorporate a gender perspective in planning. It “seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment”.<sup>65</sup> It is important to note that gender-responsive budgeting is not about having a separate

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62 Council of Europe (2004). Gender mainstreaming: Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680596135>

63 GIZ (2022). Gender Mainstreaming in the Internal Market Chapters of the Acquis - Guidelines and Tools. Accessible at: [https://pubhtml5.com/qzcc/xxqq/Gender\\_Mainstreaming\\_in\\_the\\_Internal\\_Market\\_Chapters\\_of\\_the\\_Acquis/3](https://pubhtml5.com/qzcc/xxqq/Gender_Mainstreaming_in_the_Internal_Market_Chapters_of_the_Acquis/3)

64 Republic of Kosovo Gender Equality Agency (2019). Gender Impact Assessment Manual. Available at: <https://abgj.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Publikimet%20ABGJ/Gender%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20Manual.pdf>

65 UN Women Asia and the Pacific [Online]. Gender Responsive Budgeting. Available at: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/gender-responsive-budgeting>, 1st para.

budget for women, nor does it mean to just increase spending on programmes for women. Examples of how to apply gender-responsive budgeting when mainstreaming gender in digitalization and ICT are<sup>66</sup>:

- ☑ Include and budget for initiatives to address the specific needs and constraints faced by women or men.
- ☑ Include long-term capacity building of women on technical/ technological skills; leadership and negotiation; and financial literacy and awareness.
- ☑ Allocate resources for gender awareness raising and gender mainstreaming capacity building at all levels and in ways that are adapted to the needs of different target groups, such as policy-makers, programme staff, women and men beneficiaries, staff of relevant local institutions, service delivery institutions, and women/girls/men/boys from marginalized communities.

## 4.5. Gender-responsive public procurement

Gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP) is procurement that promotes gender equality through the goods, services, or works being purchased. This means that buyers and suppliers (i) examine the impact of all contracted activities on women's and men's needs, interests, and concerns; and (ii) design and deliver contracts in a way that reduces inequalities. GRPP does not necessarily entail higher costs but does require knowledge and capacity.<sup>67</sup>

Public procurement/outsourcing to private companies which hire external labor can positively impact local employment in general and women's employment opportunities in particular. Clauses that refer to obligatory social deliverables (e.g., the share of locally contracted workers per category; the share of women to be employed; the obligation to reduce gender inequalities; adherence to gender equality principles; and similar) can be integrated in the calls for proposals to funding programmes, or in the terms of reference of public procurement procedures. Such gender clauses can also be included in

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<sup>66</sup> European Commission [Online]. Thematic Brief: Gender and Infrastructure, Transport and ICT. Available at: [https://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story\\_content/external\\_files/TA\\_Transport.pdf](https://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/TA_Transport.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming - More Tools and Methods: Gender-responsive public procurement. See: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-responsive-public-procurement>

calls for contractors to be hired for policy support services. This will ensure that projects and services receiving funds have gender capacity on board, respond to the different needs of women/girls/men/boys, and contribute to achieving gender equality.<sup>68</sup>

The European Commission explicitly states in its Gender Equality Strategy for 2020–2025 that “[t]he Commission’s guidance on socially responsible public procurement will fight discrimination and promote gender equality in public tenders”.<sup>69</sup> As one of the first deliverables of the Strategy, the Commission has proposed binding measures on pay transparency under the draft directive on pay transparency, which specifically addresses equal pay and the pay gap in the context of public procurement (in Article 21). On 24 April 2023, the European Council adopted new rules on pay transparency through the Pay Transparency Directive. Under the new rules, EU companies are required to share information on salaries and take action, if their gender pay gap exceeds five per cent. The directive also includes provisions on compensation for victims of pay discrimination and penalties, including fines, for employers who break the rules.<sup>70,71</sup> For detailed EU Guidance on GRPP see: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-responsive-public-procurement>.

Other examples of GRPP include, e.g., Switzerland, where any company that does business with the government is required to pay male and female staff equally. In Spain, the Public Procurement Law includes various gender equality clauses that refer to different phases of the procurement procedure, from contractor selection to the execution of public contracts. Anyone with a conviction for violating workers’ rights, including any conduct that violates the right and opportunities of women - such as discrimination or harassment - is not entitled to sign contracts with public sector organizations. Companies with

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68 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2016). Gender and Digital Agenda. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-and-digital-agenda>

69 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A Union of equality: Gender equality strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020) 152, 5.3.2020. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX %3A52020DC0152](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152)

70 DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms, 2021/0005(COD), 11 April 2021. See: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-81-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

71 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Online]. Gender Mainstreaming - More Tools and Methods: Gender-responsive public procurement. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-responsive-public-procurement>

more than 250 employees that have not implemented gender equality plans are also prohibited from participating in public procurement contracting.<sup>72</sup> UN Women promotes additional methods which benefit the economy, such as (i) championing procurement rules that privilege bids from women-owned businesses; and (ii) the promotion of companies beyond the common business circles, thereby widening the spectrum of employment opportunities and creating new markets.<sup>73</sup>

## 4.6. Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is used to reveal whether a programme addresses the different priorities and needs of women/girls and men/boys. The aim is to assess whether it has the intended (but also unintended) impact on gender relations, and to determine the gender aspects that need to be integrated into monitoring and evaluation systems. Effective gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation needs to include both qualitative and quantitative data that measure the impact on gender relations. Without sufficient data, a meaningful analysis of the impact on gender equality is very difficult. This implies that all data should be collected, presented, and analyzed at minimum in a sex-disaggregated manner.<sup>74</sup> Results and insights from gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation also feed into the policy cycle: they identify those aspects for which inclusion of explicit gender equality objectives and indicators would be required at the planning stage.

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72 UNODC (2020). The Time Is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption. See: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2020/THE\\_TIME\\_IS\\_NOW\\_2020\\_12\\_08.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2020/THE_TIME_IS_NOW_2020_12_08.pdf)

73 UN Women (2017). The Power of Procurement: how to source from women-owned business. See: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/the-power-of-procurement>

74 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Glossary and thesaurus [Online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1217?lang=en>



# 5 KEY RECOMMENDED ACTION IN THE DIGITALIZATION AND ICT SECTOR

Conducting gender mainstreaming interventions includes capacity building for undertaking gender analysis, as well as the active involvement of gender mainstreaming specialists throughout the design, implementation and monitoring of strategies and policies. Moreover, already existing policies under implementation should also be reviewed for their gender responsiveness (i.e., assessing how well they address gender inequalities in the sector/policy area). If needed, these policies then have to be revised, in order to mainstream gender equality within sectoral strategies, and into the structures, systems, and processes of all institutions involved.

**TABLE 4**

Priority actions for integrating gender equality goals in digitalization and ICT policies<sup>75</sup>

Main gender issue	Priority Policy Actions
<p><b>Unequal access and use of digital technology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Refine ICT-related indicators through socially and gender-sensitive access and connectivity targets</li> <li>☑ Conduct research to provide in-depth analysis of gender gaps (e.g., gender differences in digital skills, education, and employment in STEM/ICT, use and access to technology of sub-populations – i.e., disaggregated by age, urban-rural residence, dis/ability, etc.)</li> <li>☑ Collect precise sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics within the ICT industry</li> <li>☑ Implement dedicated measures for closing the digital skills gender gap to address the bottlenecks in the labor market and reduce socio-economic inequalities</li> <li>☑ Draft policies targeting gender gaps in internet and mobile phone access/usage</li> <li>☑ Implement programs to strengthen girls' self-confidence in digital skills, to increase the relevance of education outcomes and contribute to economic growth</li> </ul>

<sup>75</sup> Recommendations are based on/adapted from: ITU and UN WOMEN (2016), Action Plan to Close the Digital Gender Gap; ITU and UN WOMEN (2021), Digitally Empowered Generation Equality: Women, Girls and ICT in the Context of Covid-19 in Selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Countries; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), Gender Equality and Digitalisation in the European Union; and OECD (2018), Bridging the digital gender divide: include, upskill, innovate.

<p><b>Gender segregation across education fields (STEM, ICT)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Engage with specific EU programs and initiatives, such as STEM4youth and “STEM skills for a future-proof Europe”, through cooperation with National Educational Systems</li> <li>☑ Implement dedicated measures for establishing gender-sensitive STEM learning environments</li> <li>☑ Conduct further research into online and hybrid learning models from a gender perspective</li> <li>☑ Implement reform measures in the educational sector that pro-actively support girls’ ICT skills and enhance their enrolment in STEM studies</li> <li>☑ Train teachers in digital literacy and competence to ensure effective use of technology in schools</li> </ul>
<p><b>Women’s low participation in the digital labor market</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Deliver online or video-based upskilling and tutorials to help women make better use of digital tools and extract more value from them</li> <li>☑ Conduct research to investigate a possible mismatch between academic skills of female STEM graduates and real-world industry needs in technology employment</li> <li>☑ Conduct programmes specifically for girls to support them in participating in the labour market after graduation (school-to-work-transition)</li> <li>☑ Collaborate with the private sector in creating/ensuring a work environment that is gender-sensitive and promotes women’s talent</li> <li>☑ Encourage companies in the digital sector to sign up to the Women Empowerment Principles<sup>76</sup></li> <li>☑ Use guidelines on integrating gender equality principles into the internal procedures and workplace culture of companies in the digital sector</li> <li>☑ Enhance gender-sensitive startup investing, including investing in women</li> <li>☑ Support civil society organisations, especially youth and women’s organisations, to advance participation of women and girls in the digital economy</li> </ul>

<sup>76</sup> UN Global Compact and UN Women: Women’s Empowerment Principles. See: <https://www.weps.org/about>

<p><b>Violence against women, cyberbullying, gender-based violence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Enforce legislation protecting girls and women from all forms of harassment and gender-based cyber violence</li> <li>☑ Build upon existing national programming for online child safety to include gender-sensitive approaches</li> <li>☑ Reform legal frameworks and codes of conduct to address digital violence, including gender-based violence</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender norms and stereotypes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Expand any code of conduct on online hate speech to include the dimension of gender-based violence</li> <li>☑ Promote positive gender norms offline and online to support girls' and women's full participation in digital spaces</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gaps in gender statistics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Enhance co-ordination among data-producing institutions and INSTAT with the aim to compute EU-aligned gender indicators on digitalization and the ICT sector for Albania</li> <li>☑ Engage in all steps required for establishing and monitoring EU-aligned gender indicators on digitalization and the ICT sector in line with EU methodology</li> </ul>



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HEALTH

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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YOUTH