UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

FINANCING EQUALITY: ADVANCING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

WHAT IS GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING? (GRB)

Government budgets aren't neutral — they affect women and men, girls and boys differently. GRB uncover those differences and ensures public funds are raised and spent in a way that reduces inequality, supports inclusion, and leaves no one behind.
At its core, GRB is about fairness, smarter spending, and real impact for people's lives.

> By integrating gender considerations into targeted measures and activities, the ministry ensures that its initiatives are **responsive to the unique challenges** faced by women and girls, leaving no one behind.

Ulsi Manja, Minister of Justice, Albania

OUR REGIONAL APPROACH: ONE MODEL, FIVE PILLARS

Strategic Planning & Policy:
Embedding gender equality into national plans
1

Budget Formulation:
Integrating gender in budget preparation
2

Budget Execution & Monitoring:
Tracking what's spent for whom
3

Evaluation & Oversight:
Holding systems accountable
4

Participation & Enabling Environment:
Involving everyone, especially marginalized voices
5

WHERE WE WORK

Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Serbia

Donor: Sweden Sverige

Contributing to: SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals

WHO WE WORK WITH

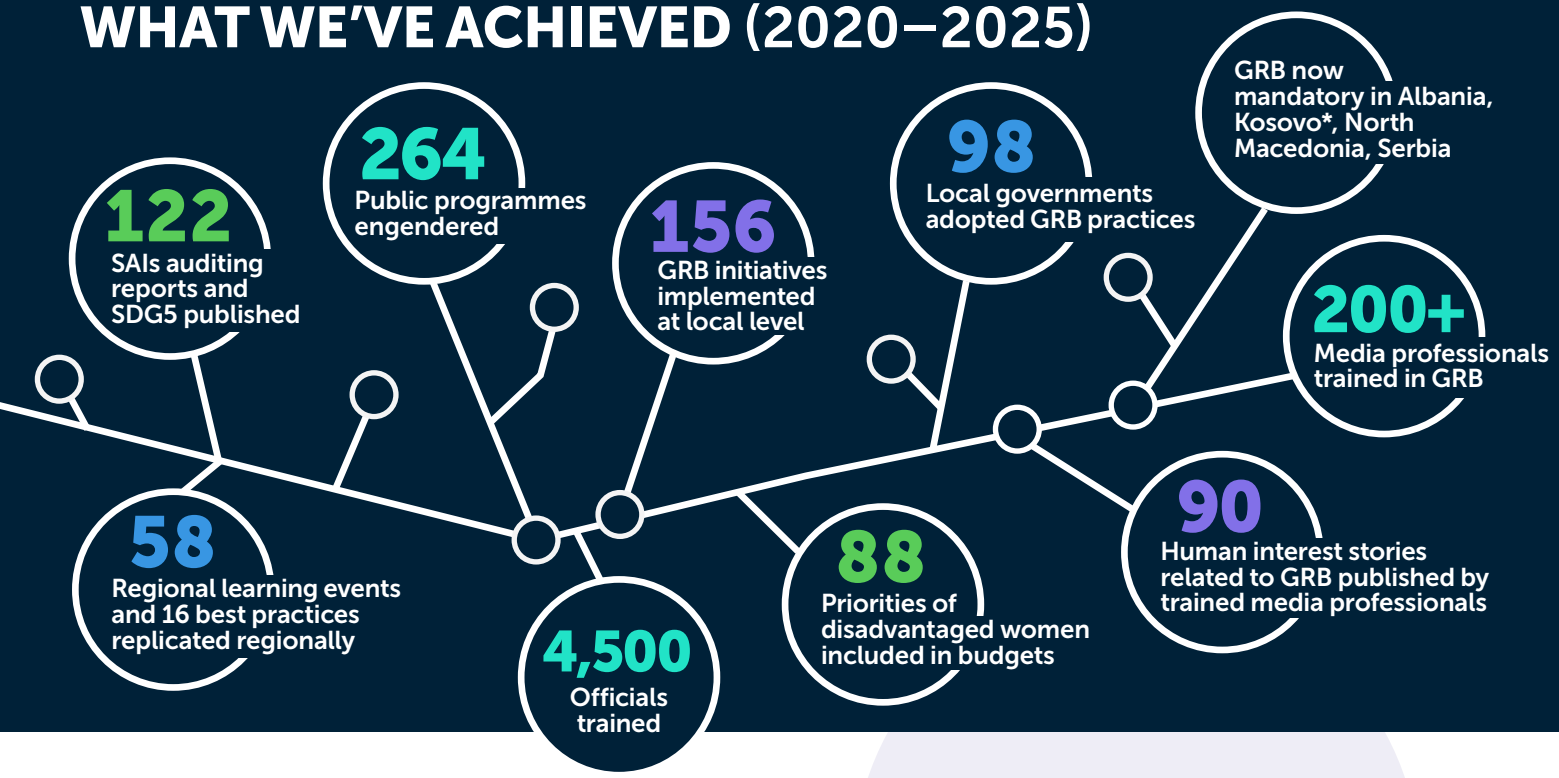
- Ministries of Finance (MoF)
- Central and local governments
- Gender equality mechanisms
- Civil society and women's groups
- Supreme Audit Institutions, Parliament and other oversight bodies
- Academia and the media

> The greatest potential of GRB is that it brings benefits for both parties: budget creators – because GRB yields a better and clearer analysis of income, expenses, fulfilment of goals, budget performance and a general justification of expenses – and citizens, because through GRB we directly respond to their most important needs in particular domains, like agriculture and social protection, for example.

Jovan Aksentijevic, Secretary of the Council for Gender Equality and the GRB Working Group, Municipality of Arandjelovac

* All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED (2020–2025)



WHAT MAKES THIS WORK (UN Women's unique role)

UN Women leads GRB globally and regionally — combining policy expertise, hands-on support, and partnerships across government institutions at national and local level parliaments, Supreme Audit Institutions, civil society, and academia. Our work ensures GRB is not a side activity but a core part of Governance and how budgets are made with the aim of leaving no one behind.

> **To be equal, empowered, to be citizens with equal opportunities, to have equal access to all resources in equal ways, equal rights – GRB will be the first step towards that goal.**

Svjetlana Tesla, Municipality Srbac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

> **Integrating a gender perspective in budgeting reflects our commitment to fairness, inclusion, and ensuring public funds meet the needs of all citizens.**

Salvador Elmazi, Director, Kosovo Budget Department, Ministry of Finance

LOOKING AHEAD (Future focus)

Institutionalization across the full budget cycle: Embed GRB systematically in planning, formulation, execution, monitoring, auditing, and reporting — not just as a one-off exercise.

Strengthening the link between GRB and public finance reforms: Align GRB with broader Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms to ensure it is part of mainstream budgetary rules, systems, and digitalization efforts.

Expanding sectoral application: Deepen GRB practices in key sectors such as climate finance, infrastructure, agriculture, care economy, and social protection to tackle structural inequalities.

Enhancing oversight and accountability mechanisms: Equip parliaments, Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), and civil society to track, evaluate, and demand results from gender-related public spending.

Building resilience through gender-responsive financing: Use GRB to support more resilient, inclusive, and crisis-responsive public budgets — especially in the context of shrinking aid, fiscal pressures, and climate change.

[1] UN Women ECARO, "GRB Programme Brief," 2024
[2] UN Women ECARO, "GRB Programme Results Matrix," 2024
[3] UN Women ECA website, "Transformative Financing for Gender Equality in the Western Balkans".