



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Implemented by
giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



© FAO/Victor Sokolowicz

Empowering Women in the Western Balkans:

Advancing Gender Equality in Agricultural Land Ownership

Introduction

Women's economic empowerment is essential in promoting equality between women and men and a precondition for sustainable development. Women's economic empowerment can be achieved through equal access to and control over economic resources and opportunities and the elimination of structural gender inequalities. Women and men's de jure access to land is regulated by the formal legal system (constitutions or laws) that grants gender equality in access to land but in some cases, laws for marriage, divorce and inheritance contradict these laws by discriminating against women and daughters.

While women's land rights are vital to development, the reality remains that these rights are often unequally shared between men and women, and are routinely set aside, denied, or given insufficient protection and enforcement.

In regard to the access to investments, subsidies, and thus to new income-generating opportunities women in rural areas are disproportionately disadvantaged due to frequent non-compliance with formal criteria, lack of property (agricultural land or real estate), lack of adequate information, insufficient education and a lack of specific advisory service offers.



SDG Indicator 5.a.1

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 5.a.1. sheds light on the disparities between women and men in securing access to agricultural land, aiming to monitor gender equality in land ownership and rights within these countries.

SDG Indicator 5.a.1 is crucial for measuring gender equality in agricultural land ownership and is divided into two subindicators:

1. Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex.

- o This subindicator assesses how many individuals in the agricultural population, disaggregated by sex, have ownership or tenure rights over agricultural land.

2. Share of women among owners or rights bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

- o This subindicator focuses on gender parity, highlighting the extent to which women are represented among those who own or hold rights over agricultural land.



What has been achieved so far?

Since **2022**, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) collaborate together in provision of technical support to Western Balkan countries in collecting data needed to measure **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 5.a.1**. Support has been provided to the national statistical systems in the Western Balkans to develop the most appropriate data collection vehicle for SDG Indicator 5.a.1 following the internationally recommended methodology, and to formulate an action plan for regular data collection and reporting on SDG Indicator 5.a.1. The regional projects “Legal Reform for Economic Development in the Western Balkans” and “Support to economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA II)”, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ, and FAO cooperated to support Western Balkan countries in implementing SDG Indicator 5.a.1.

Key partners

National Statistical Offices (NSOs) play a pivotal role in producing accurate and reliable data for SDG Indicator 5.a.1. To ensure precise data collection, NSOs use either household surveys or surveys of agricultural holdings. In 2022, GIZ, in partnership with FAO, engaged national gender statistics experts across the Western Balkans. These experts were tasked with identifying the most suitable survey methods for gathering the required data, adhering to internationally recommended methodologies. A pilot survey was implemented in September 2023 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia that have taken part in the project.

Ministries of Agriculture, as authorities in charge of the creation of agriculture and rural development policies, possessors of registers and databases of agriculture holdings and farms, conduct various data analyses, therefore closer cooperation and exchange with National Statistical Offices, in regard to statistical data, are of crucial importance. Hence, projects facilitated dialogue and exchange between the two competent institutions.



Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building

Regional Cooperation

In October 2023, a significant milestone was reached. Experts from NSOs, the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in Southeast Europe (SWG RRD), and government representatives from Ministries of Agriculture across the Western Balkans convened at FAO Headquarters in Rome. This regional roundtable focused on reviewing progress and planning the next steps towards effective reporting on SDG Indicator 5.a.1.

[Regional Roundtable “Empowerment of rural women and implementation of SDG indicator 5.a.1 in the Western Balkans” \(fao.org\)](#)



Capacity Building

Following this event, national capacity-building activities were undertaken in the third quarter of 2024 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. These activities aimed to broaden the understanding of the methodology among participants from NSOs and Ministries of Agriculture, ensuring robust and accurate data collection at the national level. By 2026, these countries will have completed the data collection process for SDG Indicator 5.a.1.

[National trainings on “SDG indicator 5.a.1 and its implementation in the Western Balkan countries” \(fao.org\)](#)



FAO is the custodian UN agency for 21 SDG indicators and is a contributing agency for a further five. In this capacity, FAO is supporting countries’ efforts in monitoring the 2030 Agenda.

For more detailed information on SDG indicators for which FAO is the custodian agency:

[Data | SDG Indicators Data Portal | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

Contact

For more information on SDG Indicator 5.a.1:

[5.a.1 Women ownership of agricultural land | SDG Indicators Data Portal | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

Focal points

Leman Yonca Gürbüz

Veronica Boero

SDG-indicators@fao.org

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence

