Promoting Women’s Access to Economic Opportunities in the Western Balkans
Key challenge for gender equality in the Western Balkans is **access to economic opportunities**

![Diagram showing labor force participation rates by sex for different countries in the Western Balkans.](image)

**Labor force participation, % population aged 15+, by sex, 2016**

- **Female**
  - Europe & Central Asia: 49.7
  - WB6: 38.7
  - Montenegro: 41.9
  - Albania: 49.9
  - Serbia: 60.0
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina: 43.4
  - FYR Macedonia: 34.4
  - Kosovo: 18.6

- **Male**
  - Europe & Central Asia: 60.0
  - WB6: 43.4
  - Montenegro: 43.9
  - Albania: 49.9
  - Serbia: 60.0
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina: 34.4
  - FYR Macedonia: 18.6
  - Kosovo: 18.6

Source: World Development Indicators; for Albania and Kosovo, from statistics agency. Notes: Data is for the working age population 15+ years old. In Kosovo, it refers to the population 15-64.
Albania Gender Equality DPF

• The **Program Development Objective** is to support the Government of Albania’s efforts to enhance the policy framework for gender equality in access to economic opportunities, with a focus on:

  (i) improving women’s access to assets;
  (ii) leveling the playing field to enhance labor market opportunities for women; and
  (iii) strengthening institutional arrangements for gender-informed policy making.
Increased gender equality in access to economic opportunities

**Medium term results**

- Increased access to assets
- Increased employability of women
- Increased awareness about gender gaps

**Short term results**

- Increased female co-ownership of immovable property (among married women)
- Awareness among large employers about gender-equal provisions in the law; reduced barriers for mothers who desire to work
- Improved gender-gaps monitoring systems for public policy

**Policy areas**

- Increasing the accuracy of immovable property registration procedures
- Improving records of property titles
- Providing affordable legal solutions to correct property titles
- Raising awareness about gender-equal worker treatment among employers
- Improving the quality and extent of education services for children
- Increasing tailored employment services for vulnerable women
- Improving monitoring of gender-responsive budget results
- Monitoring gender equality progress

**Frameworks**

- **Assets** (immovable property)
- **Opportunities** (labor market)
- **Institutions** (monitoring)

**Pillars**

- **Improving Women's Access to Assets** (prior actions 1-3)
  - **Partners:** GIZ; EU Acquis: Chapter 23; Counterparts: Justice

- **Leveling the Playing Field to Enhance Labor Market Opportunities for Women** (prior actions 4-6)
  - **Partners:** USAID, UNICEF, UN WOMEN; EU Acquis: Chapter 19; Counterparts: Finance; Education

- **Strengthening Institutional Arrangements for Gender-Informed Policy Making** (prior actions 7, 8)
  - **Partners:** UN WOMEN, EU; EU Acquis: Chapter 19; Counterparts: Finance; INSTAT

**Impact**

**Increased access to assets**

- Increased awareness about gender gaps

**Short term results**

- Awareness among large employers about gender-equal provisions in the law; reduced barriers for mothers who desire to work
- Improved gender-gaps monitoring systems for public policy

**Medium term results**

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- Increased employability of women
- Increased awareness about gender gaps
Lessons learned & reflections:

• **Create an evidence base**: Identification of policy reforms was facilitated by strong analytical underpinnings and a clear understanding of the context and the theory of change. High-return investment in analytics: 400K investment leveraged 70 million in lending and 1.5 million TA in Albania.

• **Invest in coordination and partnerships**: A DPF solely focused on Gender can integrate silo initiatives into a multi-sectoral effort. This DPF depended on strong collaboration with development partners with long-established sectoral dialogue.

• **Introduce innovation**: DPF used creative instruments to impact change (e.g. social norms through procurement).

• **Consider political economy and fragmentation**: Need to invest considerable effort to mobilize government actors; coordination by MOF contrasts with weak convening power of those in charge of gender equality agenda. “Gender champions” not necessarily linked to gender agenda.

• **Seize opportunities to replicate and leverage**: the DPF inspires replication in other countries both inside the Bank and AFD; and it was a successful tool for AFD to open business in a new country by leveraging the Bank’s knowledge and ties (while considerably boosting the financing for the program).

• **Test and update**: Regional gender DPL requires high level of synergies between cross-country reforms. Political incentives to reform “in-synch” are lower and efforts required by Bank teams are beyond typical DPF preparation.

• **Weigh-in medium vs. long term engagement**: Programmatic approach could enable the Bank to maintain engagement throughout the process to ensure implementation for early-stage reforms. In Albania, AFD’s 2-tranche DPF + TA ensures continuity over a longer period beyond the one-shot Bank DPF. Bank long-term engagement is enabled by potential EFO between AFD-Bank to support TA and second tranche monitoring.