



#AccelerateEquality



WORLD BANK GROUP  
Gender

# WORLD BANK GROUP 2024-2030 GENDER STRATEGY CONSULTATION MISSION FEEDBACK SUMMARY

**October 16-17, 2023**

**Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Government Representatives, International Donors, Civil Society  
Organizations, Academics**

## MISSION OVERVIEW

On October 16 and 17, 2023, the World Bank Group conducted a series of consultations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on the proposed World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2024-2030. These discussions aimed to engage, learn, get feedback, better understand opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment, and identify potential areas for collaboration. Key inputs from the consultations are summarized below and will be considered in developing the strategy.

## KEY MESSAGES AND FEEDBACK

- The World Bank Group gender strategy consultations in BiH **endorsed the proposed strategic objectives**. Several points were highlighted, including:
  - The urgent need to end gender-based violence (GBV), particularly underscored by a recent surge in femicides widely covered in the media;
  - Elevating human capital, especially in encouraging girls' participation in STEM fields;
  - Expanding and enabling economic opportunities, with a specific emphasis on increasing women's participation in the labor force and entrepreneurship;
  - Ensuring that ongoing STEM education for girls translates into tangible outcomes; and
  - Engaging women as leaders, especially in STEM sectors.
- The consultations **welcomed the proposed drivers of change, especially collective action**, including involving men and boys in promoting gender equality, as well as innovation and financing.
- Stakeholders sought support to **promote coherence of policies and actions** across different local and federal governments. They highlighted persistent challenges such as gender stereotypes, the existence of a glass ceiling, and limited participation of women in decision-making. Addressing these issues necessitates a transformative change in attitudes and behaviors involving both men and women, as well as boys and girls.

- Local civil society organizations (CSOs), community groups, and local religious leaders could help **involve men and boys toward a change in attitudes and behavior** with respect to gender equality. The BiH country program could consider introducing further behavioral and norms change interventions through their existing portfolio and pipeline.
- The **BiH country program is well aligned** with the proposed World Bank Group gender strategy, and it could serve as one of the **“flagship” countries for the operationalization of the strategy**. The UFGE gender flagship initiative in BiH includes initiatives for policy action and across the portfolio on GBV, employment of vulnerable women, leadership of women in the just transition, and estimating the macroeconomic effect of incorporating women in the labor market, which will be showcased in the CEM.

## MEETING TAKEAWAYS

Takeaways from stakeholder meetings included the following:

### Meeting with Academics

#### Participants:

- University of Banja Luka
  - University of Bihac
  - University of Mostar
  - University of Sarajevo
  - University of Zenica
- Key topics discussed included GBV within universities, mental health and stress disorders, women’s leadership in academia, the existence of a glass ceiling – including discrimination in recruitment and replacement, and occupational and vertical segregation.
  - Other topics discussed included the school-to-work transition – with a mismatch between skills acquired at school and those skills demanded by employers, the need to update academic curricula and to develop programs focusing on STEM for women.
  - Topics for collaboration included the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.

### Meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

#### Participants:

- Center for Civil Society Promotion (CPCD)
  - FBiH Employers Association
  - Fondacija lokalne demokratije – Sarajevo
  - Foundation United Women Banja Luka, BiH
  - Institute for Youth Development KULT, Sarajevo
  - Udruženje “Novi put”, Mostar
  - Udruženje poslovnih žena u BiH | Sarajevo
  - World Vision
- Key topics discussed included women’s leadership and mentoring programs, GBV, the need for safe houses to provide a comprehensive set of services (including funding for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, and re-training), the role of religious leaders in influencing change in attitudes, and gender training for youth.

- CSOs highlighted the increasing challenge of obtaining funds and collaborating with international organizations.
- Recommendations for the proposed gender strategy included a stronger focus on children and adolescent girls, food security, and child marriage.

## **Meeting with Government Officials**

### **Participants:**

- BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs
  - BiH Ministry of Defense
  - BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations
  - BiH Ministry of Security
  - Brcko District Department for European Integration and International Collaboration
  - Federation BiH Federal Institute of Employment
  - Federation BiH Gender Center
  - Federation BiH Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship and Crafts
  - Federation BiH Ministry of Education and Science
  - Federation BiH Ministry of Finance
  - Federation BiH Ministry of Justice
  - Republika Srpska Employment Institute
  - Republika Srpska Ministry of Economy and Entrepreneurship
  - Republika Srpska Ministry of Education and Culture
  - Republika Srpska Ministry of Family Youth and Sports
  - Republika Srpska Ministry of Labor and Disabled People's Protection
- Key topics discussed included GBV, support for women entrepreneurs, the role of women within the police department and armed forces, the need for expansion of care services, and the persistence of gender norms and stereotypes.
  - Challenges mentioned included the need to harmonize gender policies at the local and federal level; and to engage all local governments in workshops and meetings.
  - There was wide agreement with the objectives of the proposed gender strategy, especially the need for collective action.

## **Meeting with Representatives from Gender Commission in BiH Parliaments**

### **Participants:**

- Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Gorazde Assembly
  - Brcko District Assembly
  - Canton 10 Assembly
  - FBiH Parliament Committee on Gender Equality
  - Sarajevo Canton Assembly
  - Srednja Bosna Canton Assembly
  - Tuzla Canton Assembly
  - Una-Sana Canton Assembly
  - Zenica-Doboj Canton Assembly
- Parliamentarians endorsed the proposed gender strategy's strategic objectives, especially GBV and economic empowerment and enabling services.

- Key topics discussed included reforms in education, in laws to penalize femicides, women’s leadership in parliament, changing mindsets and social norms, and the need to involve men.

## **Meeting with International Donors**

### **Participants:**

- Embassy of Austria in BiH
  - Embassy of Germany in BiH
  - Embassy of Italy in BiH
  - Embassy of Switzerland in BiH
  - European Investment Bank (EIB)
  - European Union Delegation in BiH
  - International Organization for Migration (IOM)
  - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
  - UN Women
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
  - United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
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- Stakeholders endorsed the proposed World Bank Group Gender Strategy, especially valuing the emphasis on GBV and collective action.
  - Key topics discussed included women’s economic empowerment, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs for girls, GBV, fragmentation of policies in BiH, and the need for stronger coordination with the private sector.
  - Possible areas of collaboration included building narratives to counteract masculinities, collecting time-use data, and coordination on GBV action, and support for women’s leadership.