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GENDER INCLUSION IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



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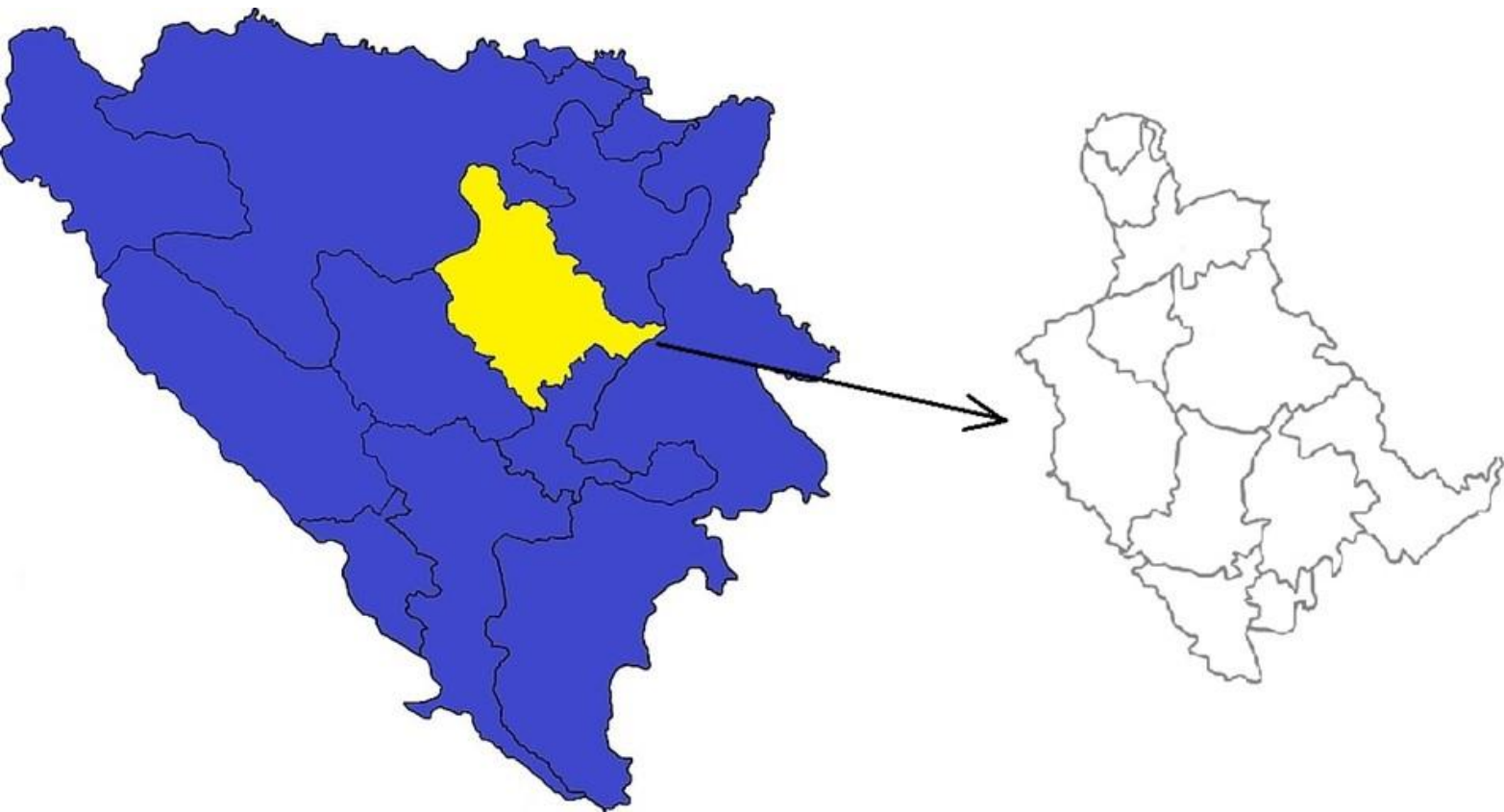


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Zenica-Doboj Canton Integrated Action Plan



Zenica-Doboj Canton
Integrated Action Plan

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1. Executive Summary

The Integrated Action Plan of Zenica-Doboj Canton, developed within the URBACT GenProcure Action Planning Network, is a strategic roadmap for embedding gender-responsive principles into public procurement practices. As a regional authority and a non-city partner, Department for Development and International Projects of Zenica-Doboj Canton recognizes the transformative potential of procurement to address gender disparities, support inclusive economic growth, and enhance institutional accountability.

This IAP emerges from a collaborative and participatory process that involved local stakeholders through the URBACT Local Group, and knowledge exchange with eight European partner cities. It builds on existing cantonal frameworks—such as the Development Strategy 2021–2027 and the Gender Action Plan 2021–2024—and aligns with Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Public Procurement Strategy (2024–2028), EU directives, and Agenda 2030 commitments.

The IAP is centred around four strategic objectives:

1. Enhance gender equality in public procurement
2. Build institutional capacity for gender-responsive procurement
3. Promote economic empowerment of women
4. Foster collaborative and inclusive policy making

These objectives are operationalized through four areas of intervention: policy development and reform, capacity building and training, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation. The plan proposes 11 detailed actions, including drafting new procurement guidelines, launching gender-focused certification programs, stakeholder workshops, and data collection systems to track progress.

Small-scale actions—such as a public sector spend analysis and the creation of a working group for gender equality in procurement—were piloted to test feasibility and shape action design. These pilots revealed strong potential for institutional change and highlighted the importance of raising awareness among procurement officers and decision-makers.

The implementation framework spans from 2026 to 2029 and includes clear governance structures, indicative budgets, risk assessments, and output indicators. The Department for Development and International Projects (DDIP) will coordinate the process, supported by municipalities, public institutions, NGOs, and businesses. To ensure accountability and demonstrate impact, annual progress reports will be published, and an independent evaluation will be conducted in 2029.

By redefining procurement as a tool for social equity and aligning local policy with broader development goals, this IAP positions Zenica-Doboj Canton as a forerunner in advancing gender-responsive public procurement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

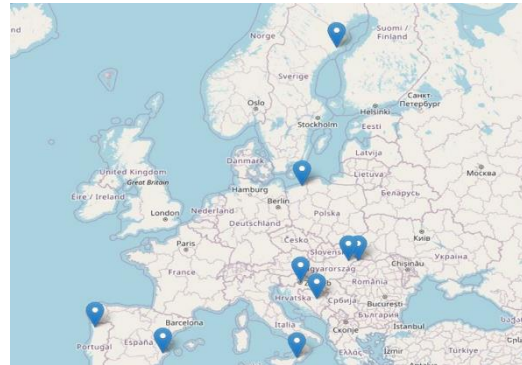
2. Introduction

An URBACT Integrated Action Plan (IAP) represents a strategic framework developed at a city-level, which is designed to address specific urban policy challenges by integrating lessons from local stakeholders, transnational partnerships, and practical testing. IAP serves as a focal point and an end goal of URBACT's Action Planning Networks by outlining future-oriented actions aimed at achieving a shared vision and strategic objectives agreed with local stakeholders. The objectives are organized into actionable areas and detailed tasks, ensuring relevance to local needs and embedding a participative, integrated approach. This IAP is for Zenica-Doboj Canton and is framed by our participation in the GenProcure Action Planning Network (APN)

2.1 An introduction to the GenProcure APN and its thematic focus

GenProcure is one of thirty Action Planning Networks (APNs) funded through the URBACT Programme. Operating for a two-and a half year period, and through a series of transnational and local level learning and knowledge exchanges, GenProcure sought to support nine Partners to create Integrated Action Plans around the topic of **Gender Responsive Public Procurement**.

The GenProcure APN is led by the City of Vila Nova De Famalicão (Portugal) and includes the following Project Partners (PP): Koszalin (Poland), Satu Mare (Romania), Umeå (Sweden), Alcoi (Spain), Messina (Italy), Department for Development and International Projects (DDIP) of Zenica-Doboj Canton (Non-City Partner - Bosnia and Herzegovina), Zagreb (Croatia), and Újfehértó (Hungary).



Public procurement in the past has been characterized by a lot of regulations, often perceived as bureaucratic with decisions primarily guided by cost considerations and compliance with complex EU and national legal frameworks. However, the transformative actions and initiatives of URBACT Networks such as Procure and Making Spend Matter are making a positive change in these areas. These initiatives have catalysed a paradigm shift, giving cities a necessary push to transcend conventional procurement paradigms and embrace a more holistic approach that integrates considerations of local economic development, social equity, and environmental sustainability into procurement strategies. As cities across Europe embark on this transformative journey, the GenProcure Network emerged as a very desirable action turning the integration of gender considerations into the procurement possibilities, thereby paving the way for Gender Responsive Public Procurement to take centre stage.

The GenProcure Network integrated public procurement with gender equality and aimed to shift procurement cultures to include gender considerations where relevant, rather than mandating them in all procedures. GenProcure aimed to educate cities on incorporating gender equality into public procurement. Through developing IAPs, partners have outlined strategies to transform procurement cultures, making gender equality a key consideration. The network's methodology was structured around the 'Cycle of Public Procurement,' which identified six stages where social, environmental, and gender factors can be integrated. Partners have been trained to assess the presence of women-owned enterprises in their

supply chains, to include gender-focused outcomes in procurement strategies, reflect gender considerations in service design, apply appropriate procedures to embed gender criteria in tendering, and measure gender impacts during contract execution.

2.2 An introduction to Zenica-Doboj and our reasons for participating in the GenProcure APN

The economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to struggle to recover from turbulent 1990s, with many traditional industries such as metal processing and steel production continuing to decline. For years, the region of Zenica-Doboj was reliant upon Iron factory 'Zeljezara' which employed the largest number of employees at the time. Foreign investors have privatised these factories, alongside many other factories in the Zenica-Doboj Canton area. This and other economic factors mean that around 38% of the working ages are currently unemployed according to Institute for Statistics of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina based on data from February 2023. However, taking into account activities associated with the informal economy this percentage becomes lower and reaches around 20%. Unlike other partners in the GenProcure APN, the Canton of Zenica-Doboj is a Regional Authority and therefore a Non-City Partner. The Canton is one of 10 such Canton's in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and effectively operates relatively independent with a number of thematic Ministries. We see the GenProcure APN and this IAP as an opportunity to contribute towards transforming the economy of the Canton and using Public Procurement alongside other things as a key lever.

Zenica-Doboj Canton, with a population of 355,000, is one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's leading industrial regions, comprising 12 administrative units. Key industries include metal production, wood processing, and construction, which predominantly employ men, alongside textiles, trade, tourism, and agriculture. Despite women being present in some industries, significant gender disparities persist in employment opportunities and societal awareness of equality. These challenges underscore the importance of actionable solutions like Integrated Action Plans, which focus on inclusivity and equal opportunities.

Participation in the URBACT network provided Zenica-Doboj Canton with an invaluable platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange. The Canton's objectives include raising awareness about gender equality, analysing local regulations, and fostering partnerships.

Participation in the URBACT network was also motivated and supported by existing strategic frameworks at both cantonal and local level strategies that prioritize inclusion and equality. The Development Strategy of Zenica-Doboj Canton 2021–2027 and the Gender Action Plan 2021–2024 both emphasize support for marginalized groups and gender-responsive policies. Additionally, many municipalities have adopted local development and gender action plans, creating a strong policy foundation for the Canton's involvement in GenProcure.

Taking into consideration that ZDC is new to URBACT, the Canton was eager to learn from more experienced cities and leverage this experience to develop sustainable solutions. These efforts aim to create impactful, long-term strategies, integrating local expertise with URBACT's collaborative framework, and positioning Zenica-Doboj Canton as a leader in gender equality and economic sustainability.

IAPs developed under URBACT have set their focus not only on planning but also on effective implementation, emphasizing funding, governance structures, and stakeholder involvement.

For Zenica-Doboj Canton, participation in such networks ensures that gender equality and public procurement principles are mainstreamed into local policies. These actions aim to yield tangible outcomes, such as improved policies, international partnerships, and actionable strategies for long-term sustainability. By integrating regional expertise and URBACT's collaborative framework, Zenica-Doboj Canton aspires to create impactful plans that will leave a mark and be a starter for change across its communities.

2.3 An introduction to URBACT, the concept of Sustainable Urban Development, the Integrated and Participatory Approach, and APNs

URBACT is an EU-funded transnational cooperation program designed to promote knowledge exchange among small and medium-sized cities to address urban challenges through Sustainable Urban Development (SUD). The URBACT method emphasizes integration by addressing social, economic, and environmental factors collaboratively across different sectors, ensuring alignment with regional and national policies, and embedding principles like gender and green considerations. Participation is central to the URBACT approach, engaging diverse stakeholders, including citizens and local businesses, to collaboratively shape city-level solutions. Action Planning Networks (APNs), a key URBACT mechanism, bring together up to 12 cities over two and a half years to co-create Integrated Action Plans (IAPs). These IAPs combine lessons from local and transnational exchanges to offer actionable strategies tailored to each city's context.

Within the URBACT framework, the GenProcure network focuses on addressing the intersection of public procurement and gender inequality. Public procurement represents a significant lever for cities, as it accounts for up to 14% of GDP across EU Member States. Through the GenProcure APN, nine cities collaborate to explore how procurement processes can go beyond the bureaucratic and legalistic framework to foster local economic, social, and environmental goals. By linking procurement strategies to gender equality, the network addresses critical gaps in representation, pay, and services. As cities embrace URBACT's methodologies, they not only develop solutions to immediate urban challenges but also lay the foundation for long-term sustainability and inclusivity.

2.4 IAP development methodology based on Transnational Meetings, Online Masterclasses, exchange with other Partners, and ULG roles



The Integrated Action Plan for the GenProcure network in Zenica-Doboj Canton has been developed according to URBACT IV Action Planning Networks 2023–2025 Integrated Action Plan Guidelines for Networks, as well as the adapted guidance prepared specifically for the GenProcure network, where the basic structure of the IAP has been explained. URBACT tools such as Problem tree and Stakeholder ecosystem map have been used which has made the process of development of the IAP easier. The

transnational meetings offer a platform for collaborative learning and exchange among partner cities and have given much needed insight into experiences and challenges which other partners face. These meetings enabled sharing insights and successes related to integrating gender-responsive approaches into public procurement while promoting cross-cultural understanding and adaptation of best practices tailored to diverse local contexts. The knowledge gained from the network's Lead Expert, thematic workshops, and on-line masterclass enabled sharing expertise and innovative solutions to common barriers, such as legal constraints or cultural resistance.

However, URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings were also vital for the development of the ZDC IAP as they provided relevant information necessary to provide a structured and comprehensive Integrated Action Plan.

2.5 An introduction to who develop the IAP and our ULG.

ULG plays a vital role in the successful implementation of urban development projects such as the GenProcure project. ULG of Zenica-Doboï canton is a multistakeholder team comprising representatives from the business, education, public, and NGO sectors. The participants included representatives from municipal departments for local economic development and tourism, and a public institution for education and



culture, company representatives from apparel production, consulting, and trade, a university student centre manager and a secondary school professor, representatives from organizations focused on tourism development and environmental protection. The group was coordinated by the Department for Development and International Projects of Zenica-Doboï canton, which also acted as a partner in the project. Each member contributed sector-specific insights, helping to co-design realistic and actionable priorities for the IAP.

This diverse group played a crucial role in shaping the IAP, bringing together a wide range of perspectives to address local challenges and ensure inclusivity. Business representatives contributed insights into market trends and opportunities for gender-responsive procurement, educational institutions offered research and innovation, the public sector ensured regulatory alignment, and NGOs provided knowledge on understanding of social and environmental priorities. Through regular meetings and participative engagement, the ULG acted as co-creators of urban policy, crafting a comprehensive and actionable plan tailored to the community's needs. This collaboration not only enriched the IAP with sector-specific expertise but also fostered a shared commitment to sustainable, gender-responsive urban development.

2.6 An introduction to the following sections of the IAP

This section provides a summary of the structure and purpose of Zenica-Doboj Canton's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) within the GenProcure network, detailing its thematic focus, strategic objectives, and the methods used in its development:

- **Section 3** provides context to the IAP by detailing our existing work around Gender Equality and Public Procurement and the challenges we face
- **Section 4** outlines the strategic framework of the IAP for advancing gender-responsive public procurement in the Zenica-Doboj Canton, focusing on clear objectives, key areas of intervention, and specific actions, all ensuring a cohesive approach to achieving the IAP's broader goals.
- **Section 5** outlines details of the actions in the plan, linking them each one to a strategic objective, outlining specific tasks, key stakeholders, funding strategies, and resource needs with including timelines for implementation, monitoring mechanisms.
- **Section 6** sets out the Implementation Framework, detailing governance, costs and funding, timeline, monitoring, and risk management to ensure the IAP is delivered effectively.

3. Context, Needs and Vision

Section 3 sets out the context for this IAP for Zenica-Doboj, providing a detailed foundation for understanding the overarching theme of the GenProcure APN, the current situation surrounding Public Procurement and Gender Equality, the challenges faced, and the vision for the future. The section highlights the focus on Gender Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP), addressing the intertwined challenges European cities face due to bureaucratic barriers, technical complexities, and established cultural norms. The GenProcure APN uses collaborative exchanges among partners to make actionable strategies that embed gender considerations into procurement practices, aiming to reduce inequalities and foster inclusivity.

Zenica-Doboj Canton's current landscape is characterized by persistent gender inequality, including low labour market participation for women, wage disparities, and underrepresentation in political and leadership roles as outlined in the content below. Existing public procurement practices comply with national and EU standards but lack socially responsible and gender-sensitive dimensions. The Gender Action Plan (2021–2024) and the upcoming Public Procurement Strategy (2024–2028) offer frameworks for improvement, prioritizing gender equity and integrating green and socially responsible procurement principles.

By embedding these principles into procurement strategies, the Zenica-Doboj Canton seeks to foster sustainable development, reduce gender disparities, and support women-owned businesses, ultimately creating a more equitable and inclusive society. Through the GenProcure network, the Zenica-Doboj Canton aligns its efforts with local, national, and international strategies, transforming procurement into a powerful tool for social change.

3.1 The overarching theme of the GenProcure APN of Gender Responsive Public Procurement

The GenProcure Action Planning Network (APN) focuses on Gender Responsive Public Procurement – an emerging field that seeks to address gender inequality through more inclusive procurement practices. Public procurement has traditionally been viewed as a technical and bureaucratic function, and it often neglected gender-related issues such as representation, pay equity, and access to services.

GenProcure network, which is led by Vila Nova de Famalicão, aims to provide a platform for nine partner cities to collaborate and develop Integrated Action Plans which will try to embed gender considerations into procurement processes.

While many cities are starting to integrate environmental and social dimensions into procurement, gender equality remains under-addressed. GenProcure acknowledges this gap and emphasizes the need for urgent action. However, partner cities face challenges such as legal complexities, limited institutional capacity, and entrenched gender norms. In response, GenProcure offers a space for innovation, collaboration, and shared learning, helping cities navigate these challenges and create transformative, inclusive procurement systems.

3.2 The current situation in Zenica-Doboj around Gender Equality and Public Procurement.

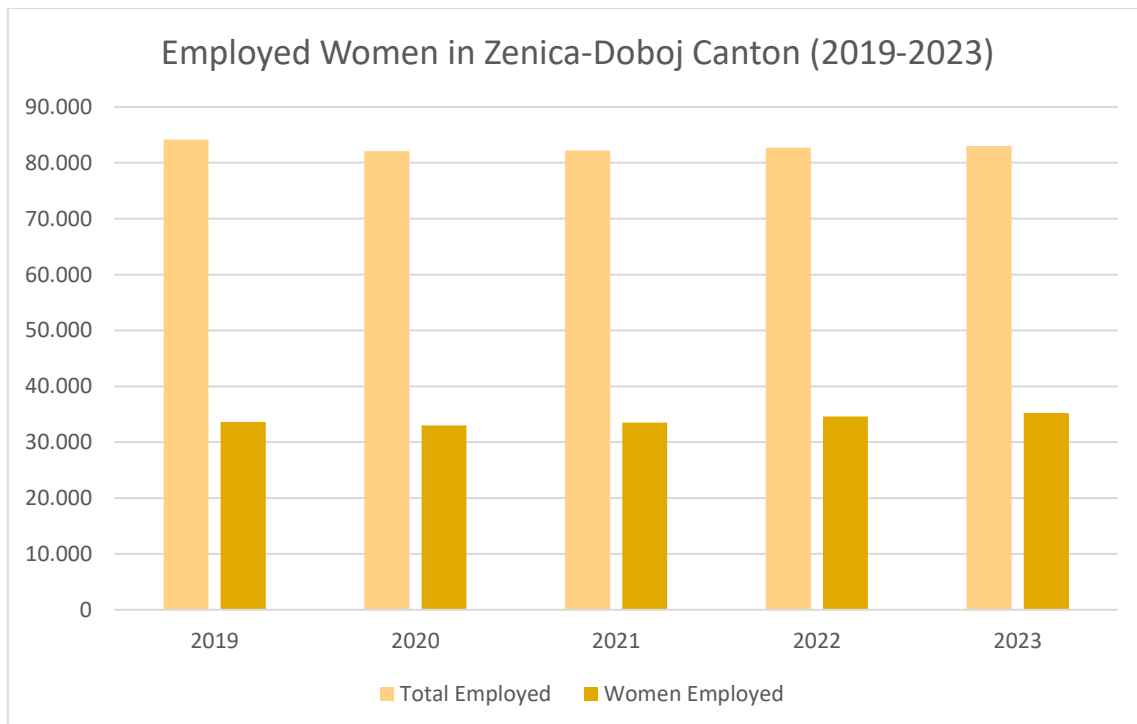
In essence, the journey towards integrating gender considerations into public procurement in Zenica-Doboj Canton represents a paradigm shift in the way procurement is conceptualized and practiced. It embodies a commitment to advancing gender equality, fostering sustainable development, and redefining the role of public procurement as a stimulant for social change. Through collaboration, innovation, and shared learning, Zenica-Doboj is ready to pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future, both within its own jurisdiction and across the broader field of public procurement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

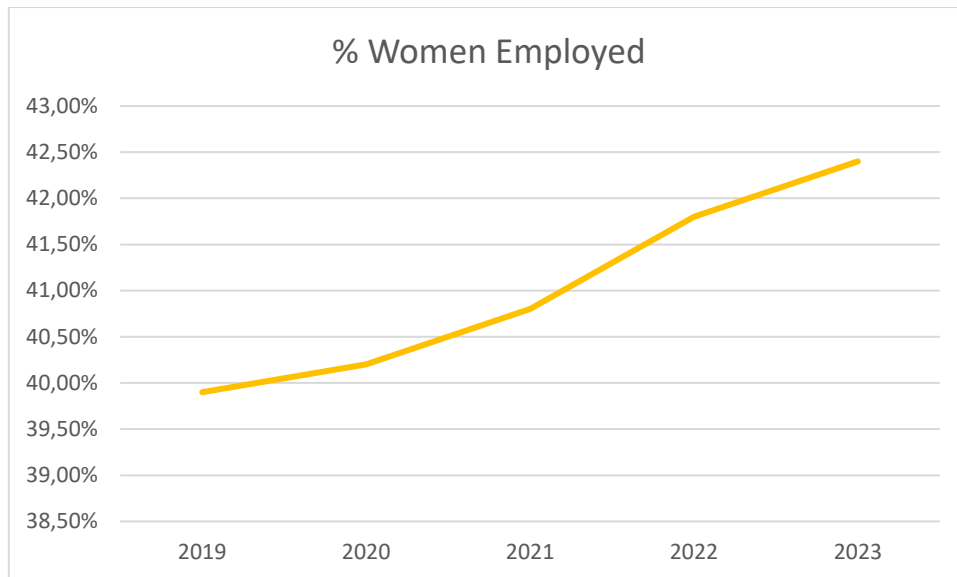
3.2.1 Gender Inequality

3.2.1.1 Data around Gender Inequality in Zenica-Doboj

Gender inequality is evident in various aspects of life within Zenica-Doboj Canton, mirroring wider societal patterns observed throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Below are some notable dimensions:

- **Labour Market Participation:** Women in Zenica-Doboj Canton face barriers to full and equal participation in the labour market. Traditional gender roles often dictate that women assume primary responsibilities for caregiving and household duties, leading to their underrepresentation in formal employment sectors. The unemployment rate for women is 54,3%, indicating significant challenges in accessing employment opportunities and achieving economic autonomy. Moreover, in private sector, women encounter discrimination and wage gaps in the workplace, limiting their economic autonomy and opportunities for professional advancement.





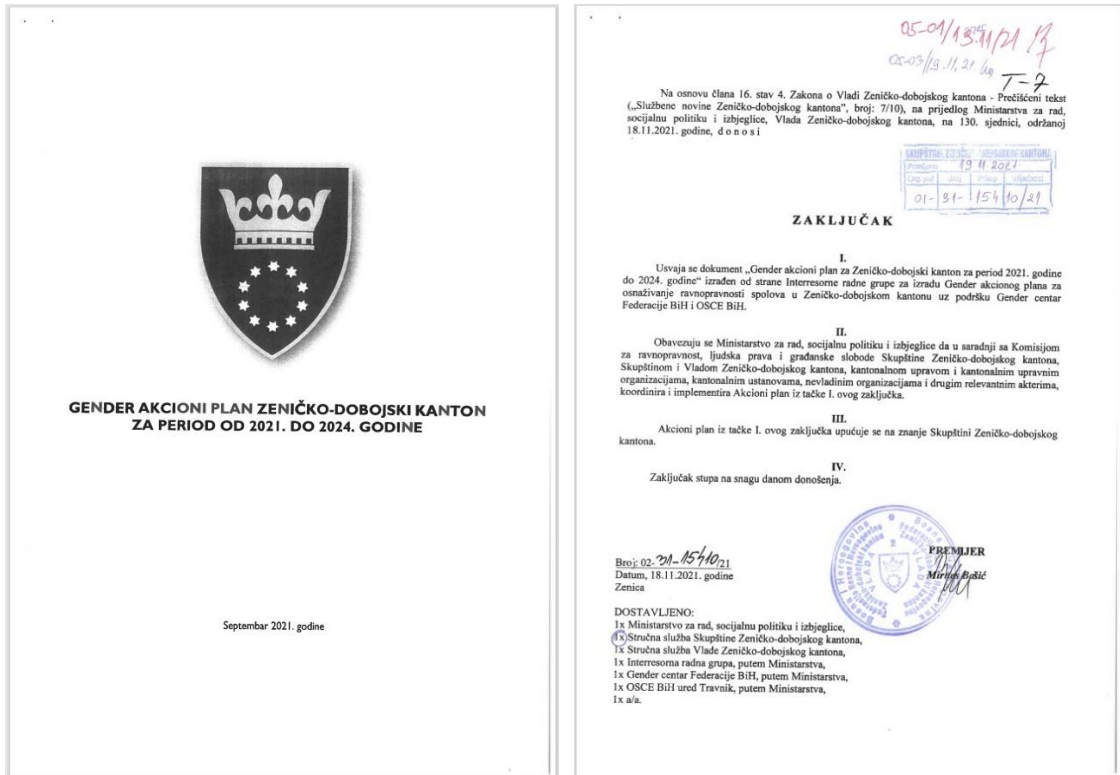
- Education: While access to education is generally equitable in Bosnia and Herzegovina, gender disparities persist in certain fields of study and levels of education. Cultural norms and societal expectations may discourage girls from pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields or higher education, reinforcing gender stereotypes and limiting their career options and earning potential.
- Political Representation: Women are still to a point underrepresented in political decision-making processes in Zenica-Doboj Canton which can be seen by the number of representatives of the Canton Assembly (13 women representatives out of 35 representatives in total) and number of Heads of Canton Ministries (2 women representatives out of 10 representatives in total).

Addressing gender inequality in Zenica-Doboj Canton requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of discrimination and promotes gender mainstreaming across all sectors of society. Efforts to promote gender equality in public procurement, as envisioned within the GenProcure Network, represent one aspect of a broader strategy to advance women's rights and empowerment in Zenica-Doboj Canton.

3.2.1.2 Gender Equality Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Gender Action Plan Implementation Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a joint effort of the Gender Equality Agency which operates under Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and the Gender Center of Republika Srpska, with support from the Kingdom of Sweden through SIDA. It aims to ensure the sustainable implementation of the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Zenica-Doboj Canton, the Constitution guarantees fundamental human rights, aligned with national and Federation-level standards. The Gender Action Plan of ZDC 2021–2024 builds on this framework and is rooted in the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was adopted in 2003, and amended 2009, incorporates CEDAW standards and mandates equal rights and protections in all areas of life. Article 24 of this law provides the legal basis for adopting cantonal gender action plans.



The ZDC Gender Action Plan outlines three mid-term goals (MTGs):

- MTG 1: Strengthen institutional support for gender equality
 - ❖ Formation of a coordinating body
 - ❖ Gender impact assessments for laws and budgets
 - ❖ Sectoral analyses in priority areas
- MTG 2: Improve gender equality across key sectors
 - ❖ Reduce gender gaps in education, employment, and social protection
 - ❖ Promote equal representation in public bodies
 - ❖ Enhance health services and protection from gender-based violence
- MTG 3: Monitor and collaborate for ongoing improvement
 - ❖ Regular gender equality assessments
 - ❖ Civil society engagement in priority setting
 - ❖ Promotion of gender equality across sectors

Through this plan, ZDC is committed to advancing gender equality by strengthening representation, reforming policies, and fostering inclusive initiatives. These efforts not only improve local governance but also contribute to broader societal progress toward equality and empowerment.

3.2.2 Public Procurement

3.2.2.1 The historical approach to Public Procurement

Public procurement in Bosnia and Herzegovina is conducted in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement in B&H¹ and its sublegal acts, such as regulations and guidelines. Additionally, ministries and other administrative bodies of the Zenica-Doboj Canton comply with the procedures outlined in the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions if the procurement is financed through EU funds. This approach ensures transparency, efficiency, and compliance with international standards in public procurement processes. Implementation of these regulations is not merely a formality but a crucial step toward ensuring a fair and equitable market environment and promoting economic stability and development. Moreover, it enables better utilization of public funds, directly contributing to the improvement of the quality of public services and infrastructure and creating a more favourable business environment for all market participants.

Public procurement in B&H faces new challenges, as there is increasing pressure to demonstrate the best value for public funds in budgetary environments. This includes leveraging opportunities presented by digitalisation and emerging markets, contributing strategically to overarching policy goals and societal values such as innovation, social inclusion, and economic and environmental sustainability. Efforts also aim to optimize accessibility and take responsibility for minimizing inefficiencies, waste, irregularities, fraud, and corruption.

3.2.2.2 The new Public Procurement Strategy

Unlike the previous strategy, the 2024-2028 Public Procurement Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina includes green procurement aspects, promoting a circular economy, integrating the economy into environmental management systems, obtaining environmental certifications, and reducing the carbon footprint of businesses and products.

The UNDP pilot project "Green Public Procurement in the Service for Common Affairs of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina" resulted in recommendations for incorporating green criteria into public procurement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it was found that the total amount of money spent on "green" public procurement could not be determined.

Analysis and recommendations indicate Bosnia and Herzegovina's tendency to take steps forward in this area, especially considering its commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Program 2030 (Agenda 2030) and the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. Although the Public Procurement Law lacks precise definitions or provisions from 2014 EU directives, it still provides ample opportunities to include "green" criteria in procurement processes at all key stages. However, there is a lack of strategy, guidance, or best practice examples specifically addressing socially responsible public procurement at the sub-legislative level.

¹ Available on: <https://ksud-zenica.pravosudje.ba/vstvfo/B/41/article/145382>, last accessed on July 7th 2025, 13:37

As part of the Public Procurement Strategy for the period 2024-2028², as part of the section **Introduction of green and socially responsible public procurement**, three measures were proposed as guidelines for their implementation.

- *Measure*: Preparation of guidelines for the application of green procurement consists of 2 proposed actions:
 1. Market analysis and definition of possible subject matters of green public procurement
 2. Preparation of instructions for specific public procurement subject matters
- *Measure*: Preparation of guidelines for the application of socially responsible procurement consists of 1 proposed action:
 1. Preparation of guidelines
- *Measure*: Establishment of a regulatory framework to provide the opportunity and/or obligation to conduct green and socially responsible public procurement consists of 2 proposed actions:
 1. Preparation of the new public procurement law
 2. Preparation of the by-law on green public procurement

Green public procurement in the public sector encourages the private sector to recognize the importance of procuring green products or services. Choosing goods, services, and works with a lesser impact on the environment can make a significant contribution to achieving local, regional, national, and international sustainability goals. Taking into consideration that there is very little mention of the gender in the aforementioned Strategy, Zenica-Doboj could be considered a forerunner in Bosnia and Herzegovina context in starting to implement the principles of these strategies as a result of being involved in GenProcure project.

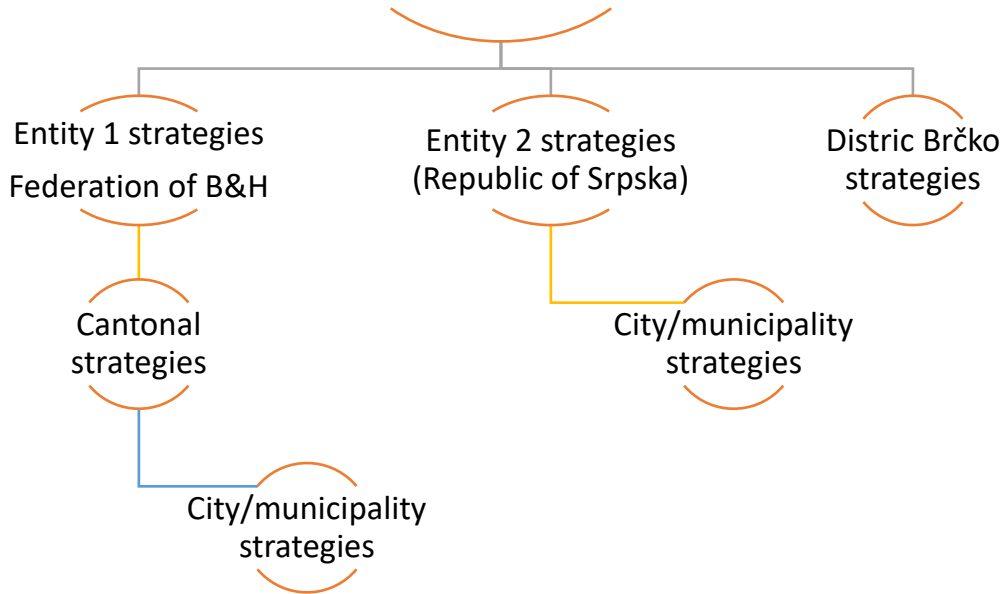
The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) aligns with and builds upon multiple local, cantonal, national, and international strategies that emphasize gender equality, sustainability, and responsible public spending. To streamline the policy background and ensure clarity, the key policy frameworks relevant to GRPP are summarized in the table below.

3.3 How the IAP links to wider strategy and policy locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

The integration of Gender-Responsive Public Procurement into Bosnia and Herzegovina's broader strategic framework could reflect the country's commitment to inclusive development, gender equality, and sustainable growth. This alignment can be based in key national and local policy documents that define priorities for gender equality, governance, and economic reform.

² Documents in B/C/S language available on: <https://www.javnenabavke.gov.ba/bs-latn-ba/news/386/vijece-ministara-bosne-i-hercegovine-usvojilo-strategiju-javnih-nabavki-za-period-2024-2028>, last accessed July 7th 2025, 14:00.

National strategies Bosnia and Herzegovina



B&H's strategic frameworks—including the Public Procurement Strategy, Gender Action Plan, and Agenda 2030 alignment—serve as the foundation for embedding GRPP in institutional planning and procurement practices across all levels of government. At the cantonal level, particularly in Zenica-Doboj Canton, these frameworks could be operationalized through aligned development strategies and annual planning cycles. Despite these advancements, there remain challenges in data disaggregation, which are crucial for monitoring progress. The table below provides an overview of the main strategic documents and how they support the goals of gender-responsive procurement:

Policy/Strategy	Level	Key Elements Relevant to GRPP	Gaps / Opportunities
ZDC Development Strategy (2021–2027)	Cantonal	Supports inclusive growth; prioritizes marginalized groups incl. women; aligns with SDGs	GRPP not explicitly mentioned, but gender budgeting & local ownership can be leveraged
ZDC Gender Action Plan (2021–2024)	Cantonal	Establishes gender equality goals; includes gender impact assessments & sectoral analysis	No direct link to procurement; opportunity to integrate through policy updates
Law on Public Procurement (B&H)	National	Legal framework allows for social/green procurement;	Gender criteria not explicitly included;

		transparency ensured	policy update opportunity
B&H Public Procurement Strategy (2024–2028)	National	Introduces green and socially responsible procurement; includes guideline development	Gender is underrepresented; ZDC can pilot gender integration
B&H Gender Action Plan (2023–2028)	National	Aligns with CEDAW and EU standards; promotes gender mainstreaming in public services	Implementation tools for procurement lacking
EU Growth Plan for Western Balkans	EU / Regional	Offers €6B linked to reforms incl. rule of law, human capital, green economy	Potential to include GRPP in reforms tied to budget support and grants

3.3.1 Development Strategy of Zenica-Doboj Canton

The Development Strategy of the Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) for the period 2021-2027 lays down a roadmap for holistic growth, emphasizing gender equality as a fundamental component. Annually, the ZDC formulates and adopts Guidelines for three-year work planning, synchronized with the Development Strategy. Additionally, an Annual Report on the Implementation of the ZDC Development Strategy is prepared to assess progress. Importantly, an evaluation is conducted in the penultimate year of the strategy's implementation (2026) to gauge effectiveness and gather inputs for subsequent planning cycles, leveraging networks like GenProcure's IAP as inputs for future strategies.

The Development Strategy of the Zenica-Doboj Canton is an integrated, multisectoral strategic document that defines public policies, guides the development of the ZDC territory and local self-government units, and serves as a roadmap for overall social development. The ZDC Development Strategy establishes development objectives and priorities for the Canton, outlines the means of their achievement, and provides the financial and institutional framework for implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. Simultaneously, it serves as a foundational document and basis for the development of sectorial strategies, spatial plans, budgets, and development investment programs of the Canton, as well as for the Government's work program for its term, three-year work plans of ministries and other bodies, and the annual work program of the Government.

During the process of drafting the aforementioned strategic document, particular attention was paid to achieving the legal principles of development planning, which include, among other things, gender equality and equal opportunities for all citizens. Additionally, every year, Guidelines for three-year work planning in the Zenica-Doboj Canton (1+2 rolling system) are prepared and adopted, along with an action plan, in accordance with the ZDC Development Strategy as mandatory accompanying documents. These Guidelines serve as the basis for planning by cantonal administrative bodies, aiming to adequately incorporate developmental priorities defined in the strategic documents for that level of government. They also serve as

a guide for planning and implementing specific projects and activities over the planned three-year period.

3.3.2 Annual Report on Strategy Implementation

The Zenica-Doboj Canton prepares an Annual Report on the Implementation of the ZDC Development Strategy every year. This report analyses the current state and trends of development in the Zenica-Doboj Canton in the areas of economic and social development, environmental protection, energy efficiency, and the development of public infrastructure. Additionally, it provides a detailed analysis and presentation of the degree of strategy implementation, institutional capacities, and specific challenges that may have arisen in the implementation of the Strategy and development management.

During the planned implementation period of the Development Strategy (in 2026), as well as in the penultimate year, an evaluation will be conducted. The on-going evaluation aims to assess the degree of implementation of strategic documents, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of planned measures and results in relation to set goals and expectations. It also aims to summarize outcomes and provide input for strategic documents for the next planning cycle. Given the significant interconnectedness of the GenProcure network's Integrated Action Plan (IAP), the IAP could serve as an input for the ZDC Development Strategy for the next planning cycle, for the period 2028-2034.

3.3.3 Gender Action Plan of Zenica-Doboj Canton

The Gender Action Plan of the Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) for the period 2021-2024 outlines specific initiatives and measures aimed at promoting gender equality within the Canton. It encompasses strategies to address gender disparities and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender. The plan focuses on various aspects such as increasing female representation in leadership positions, implementing gender-sensitive policies across sectors, providing training programs on gender equality, and fostering a more inclusive work environment. Through targeted actions, the Gender Action Plan seeks to create a more equitable society and advance gender equality within the Zenica-Doboj Canton.

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, upon the proposal of the Federal Institute for Development Programming, has adopted a resolution endorsing the institute's activities for the participation of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Commission's Growth Plan for the Western Balkans initiative. Additionally, Federal ministries and other federal institutions responsible for implementing activities from the Reform List (quantitative and qualitative steps) within this initiative are tasked with actively participating in upcoming activities. They are also instructed to submit proposals for representatives to the permanent working body to the Federal Institute for Development Programming by no later than April 3rd of this year. The resolution designates the Federal Institute as the coordinator of the process, responsible for preparing a Proposal for the establishment of a permanent working body for the implementation and monitoring of reform activities (quantitative and qualitative steps) of the European Commission within the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans initiative.

In the information available, it was clarified that the Growth Plan will be implemented through a new financial instrument worth six billion euros for the Western Balkans from 2024 to 2027. The Plan introduces a new €6 billion financial instrument to support reforms in the region, including around €1 billion for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Funding—distributed through grants and favourable loans—will depend on the implementation of reform agendas aligned with the Economic Reform Program, national growth strategies, and EU policy guidelines.

Key reform areas include green and digital transition, private sector development, human capital, and rule of law. These priorities provide an opportunity to align public spending with social objectives, including gender equality, by integrating Gender-Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP) into reform efforts. Leveraging these funds to promote inclusive procurement practices can contribute to both economic growth and social equity, aligning with GenProcure's goals.

3.3.4 Integration of Gender-responsive Public Procurement

Concerning the integration of gender-responsive public procurement within the wider strategy and policy framework on the state level, particularly highlighted in the Strategy of Public Procurement of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2024-2028 and the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2023-2028, signifies a significant step towards promoting inclusivity and equality in procurement processes. The inclusion of gender considerations in public procurement aligns with the overarching goals of both the Public Procurement Strategy and the Gender Action Plan, fostering sustainable development and social cohesion. By incorporating gender-sensitive criteria and practices into procurement procedures outlined in these strategic documents, Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates its commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of public procurement but also contributes to the achievement of broader national and international sustainability objectives. The European path of Bosnia and Herzegovina began in 2008 when the Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed. B&H applied for EU membership in February 2016 and was granted candidate status in December 2022. In September 2015, B&H, together with 192 member states of the UN, committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Programme until 2030, known as Agenda 2030. This Agenda consists of 17 sustainable development goals and 169 sub-goals. The first step in the realization of Agenda 2030 in B&H is the creation of the Framework for Sustainable Development Goals in the country. The Framework is a joint document of all levels of government that determines the broad directions of development so that authorities at all levels and society in B&H contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development. Based on the analysis of the state of sustainable development in B&H, three directions were identified development in the country: Good governance and management of the public sector, Smart growth, and Society of equal opportunities. In addition, there are two horizontal themes: Human capital for the future and the principle "No one should be excluded". The Framework does not contain an action plan or budget but is implemented through a system of strategic planning and development management at all levels of government in the country.

Development Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2021-2027 is the key document that includes the latest Agenda 2030, EU recommendations, Economic Investment Plan, Common Socio-economic Forms for the period 2019-2022 and the Strategy of the Smart Specialization. In accordance with the Law on Development Planning and Management in the FB&H, the obligation of vertical coordination and harmonization of

strategic documents at different levels of government in FB&H according to the common development goals, i.e. Development Strategy of the FB&H provides a basis for the coordination and development of cantonal development strategies. Priorities and measures from Development Strategy of the FB&H and from the Sustainable Development Goals are incorporated in the priorities and measures in the Development Strategy of Zenica-Doboj Canton.

The implementation of Development Strategy of ZDC, i.e. Framework for Sustainable Development Goals, is carried out through the three-year and annual work plans of the cantonal administrative bodies, which are prepared on the basis of the development strategy, where measures from the strategy are transferred to the work plans of the administrative bodies. This means that the development goals, priorities, measures and activities and allocation of resources at different levels of government reflect the aspiration towards the implementation of the Framework for Sustainable Development Goals, thus ensuring coherence with public policies and compliance with budget planning and other funding sources.

Furthermore, according to the Work Plan of the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is responsible for regularly maintaining the portal <https://sdg.bhas.gov.ba> to produce thematic bulletins "Statistics for Sustainable Development Indicators." However, on the website, there are no data available for some indicators, while for others, there is no data for the years 2021 and 2022. Instead, aggregate indicators for the entire country are presented, without disaggregation into entities/cantons/local government units, indicating that these indicators cannot be directly tracked at the cantonal level. This underscores the importance of enhancing data availability and disaggregation to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of progress towards gender-responsive public procurement and broader sustainability goals outlined in strategic frameworks like the Public Procurement Strategy and the Gender Action Plan.

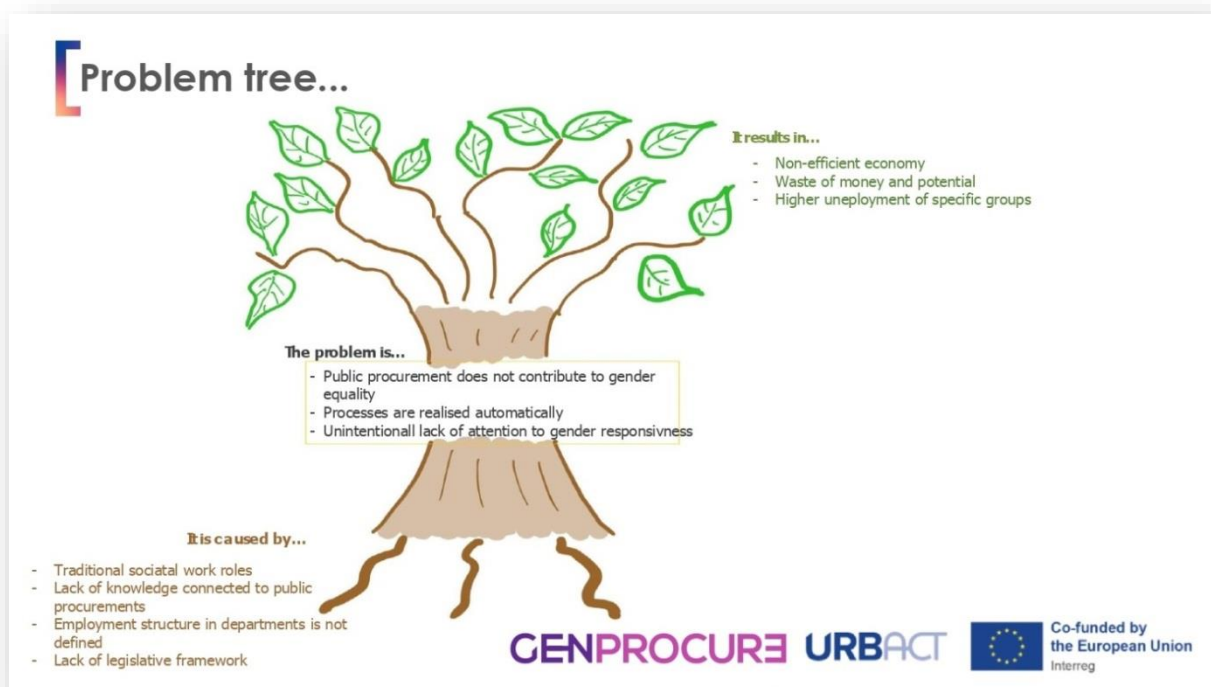
3.4 The specific problem we are looking to address at local level around Gender Responsive Public Procurement and the causes and effects of that problem.

A precise local challenge to be addressed in Zenica-Doboj Canton concerning the GENPROCURE network of the URBACT programme is the lack of awareness and understanding of gender-responsive public procurement practices among procurement professionals and stakeholders. **Despite the potential benefits of integrating gender perspectives into contractual agreements, there may be limited knowledge and expertise within the Canton's ministries and other public administration bodies regarding how to effectively implement such measures.**

This lack of awareness may result in procurement processes that inadvertently sustain gender inequalities or fail to leverage opportunities to advance gender equality. For example, contracts are mostly awarded without considering the gender-specific needs and preferences of end-users, which can sometimes lead to the provision of goods and services that do not completely meet the diverse needs of men and women in the community. Similarly, procurement decisions may overlook opportunities to support women-owned businesses or promote women's participation in traditionally male-dominated industries.

Considerations, comments and insights of ULG members have been integrated into the URBACT TOOL Problem Tree. This tool highlighted various underlying issues within the current framework of public procurement. The inadequate legal framework emerged as a central concern, particularly regarding its failure to address gender aspects and related concerns in regard to the current implementation of public procurement practices. Suggestions were put forth to introduce measures such as awarding additional points to companies with female ownership or significant female representation in management roles or even proposing a mandatory 40% representation of both genders among selected candidates. While gender equality was acknowledged as the primary focus, the importance of considering other relevant factors in subsequent discussions was also emphasized. However, concerns were raised about imposing criteria that may affect competition rights. The root causes of these issues were explored, with consensus reached on the need to advocate for gender equality to be ensured in legal solutions. Additionally, the issue of unconscious oversight was highlighted, where individuals with established roles and experience inadvertently overlook gender considerations. Advocacy efforts were proposed to address these systemic challenges and ensure a more inclusive and equitable approach to public procurement practices moving forward. The graphic representation is shown below:

PROBLEM TREE – ZENICA – DOBOJ CANTON ULG GROUP

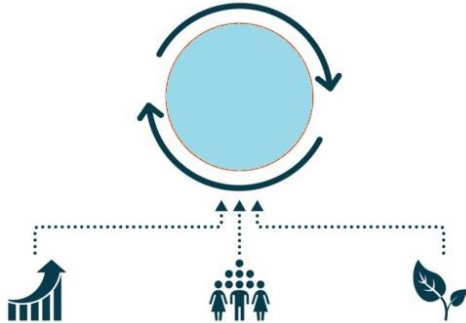


3.5 Our Vision.

The vision for Zenica-Doboj Canton's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) within the GENPROCURE network is to provide starting point to try to reshape public procurement practices by prioritizing gender equality and inclusivity. In this way, it will be ensured that vast majority of procurement decisions contribute to sustainable development and the reduction of gender disparities. This means not only fostering equal opportunities for men and women in economic activities but also supporting the growth of women-owned businesses and actively addressing gender

imbalances in procurement outcomes. Through this transformative approach, we predict a future where public procurement becomes a powerful tool for building a more equitable and inclusive society, setting a new standard for other regions in the country.

VISION STATEMENT:



Reshaping public procurement by prioritizing gender equality and inclusivity, ensuring that procurement decisions foster sustainable development and reduces gender disparities and actively contribute to building a more equitable and inclusive society in the upcoming 5-year period.

3.6 Linking this IAP to the concept of Integration.

The concept of integration is vital for effectively implementing Gender Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP) in Zenica-Doboj Canton and the 12 aspects of integration are very important. However, a few of them stand out and can be considered as more important than the rest of them.

3.6.1 Aspects of Integration: Policy Integration

Policy integration in Zenica-Doboj canton is essential in order to ensure that introduction of gender-responsive measures can be systematically embedded within public procurement procedures. This means that procurement policies should be oriented towards specific guidelines and criteria that mandate the consideration of gender impacts in procurement decisions and not only ensuring just the mentioning of gender equality. This should include specific guidelines and criteria that can be integrated and followed through.

3.6.2 Aspects of Integration: Institutional Integration

Institutional integration is another critical aspect, involving the building of capacity within institutions to support and enforce GRPP practices. This entails equipping public procurement officials with the necessary skills and knowledge through targeted training programs. Institutions should also allocate dedicated resources to ensure that gender considerations are consistently applied in procurement processes.

3.6.3 Aspects of Integration: Stakeholder Integration

Stakeholder integration is equally important, as it involves engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including women's organizations, private sector entities, and civil society groups, in the procurement process. Effective stakeholder engagement ensures that the voices and needs of women are heard and addressed, leading to more inclusive and equitable procurement outcomes.

3.6.4 Aspects of Integration: Monitoring and Evaluation Integration

Monitoring and evaluation integration is crucial for establishing robust frameworks to track and assess the impact of GRPP initiatives. This involves setting up systems for data collection and analysis, which can provide insights into the effectiveness of GRPP policies and help identify areas for improvement.

Currently, the integration of gender considerations in public procurement within Zenica-Doboj Canton is in its early stages. While there are existing policy frameworks, their implementation is often inconsistent and lacks comprehensiveness. Institutional capacity is limited, with few dedicated resources and insufficient training for procurement officials on gender-responsive practices. Stakeholder engagement is sporadic and does not fully leverage the potential contributions of women's organizations and other key groups. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are either absent or inadequate, making it difficult to measure progress or identify areas needing attention.

To improve integration through the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), strengthening policy frameworks is a priority. This involves developing and implementing comprehensive gender-responsive procurement policies that align with national and international standards. Capacity building is another key area, requiring investment in training programs for procurement officials and stakeholders to enhance their understanding and application of GRPP principles.

Enhanced stakeholder engagement is also crucial for fostering collaboration among government bodies, civil society, and the private sector to create more inclusive procurement practices. Finally, effective monitoring and evaluation systems need to be established to ensure continuous tracking of GRPP initiatives, allowing for regular assessments and adjustments to strategies as needed.

3.7 Testing Actions Undertaken to Develop this IAP

The initial ideas for testing actions in Zenica-Doboj Canton are designed to address the identified gaps and leverage the key aspects of integration. The actions selected for testing are:

- Spending analysis of the public sector ZDC
- Creation of a working group for gender equality in public procurement

A comprehensive analysis of public procurement spending which will categorize procurement spending according to several key dimensions to provide a clear understanding of current practices and identify areas for improvement regarding gender responsiveness will be done. Besides the initial testing idea, Creation of a working group for gender equality in public procurement was also proposed for testing. This action aims to foster gender equality in public procurement by establishing a working group dedicated to integrating gender-sensitive practices into the procurement processes of Zenica-Doboj Canton. The working group will focus on evaluating existing policies, identifying gaps, and developing tailored guidelines to promote fair gender representation.

3.7.1 Findings of testing Small Scale Actions (SSA)

The implementation of these testing actions followed a structured approach where detailed procurement data from the Public Procurement Agency's portal was collected, focusing on the specified categories and key contracting authorities. Using the methodology developed by other project partner from the APN GENPROCURE data was analysed, spending categorized, and patterns and disparities were identified. The findings were shared with key stakeholders, including government bodies, women's organizations, and the private sector, to solicit feedback and refine the proposed measures. The outcomes of the pilot initiatives were evaluated and successful strategies for broader implementation were identified.

By adopting this comprehensive approach, Zenica-Doboj Canton aimed to ensure that public procurement practices are inclusive and supportive of gender equality, ultimately contributing to more equitable economic development.

3.7.1.1 Spend analysis of the public sector in ZDC findings

While doing the Spending analysis, 1 geographical level has taken into account as local – Zenica-Doboj Canton with its 12 administrative units which includes 3 cities and 9 municipalities. The locality was determined by the address of the contractor's headquarters. Since an option of software analytics was not available, some manual work on locations of contractors' headquarters and size of enterprises has been done. Categories for Spending Analysis which will be done in Zenica-Doboj Canton as a Small scale action were as follows:

- Local vs. Non-Local Enterprises: Analysing whether public procurement funds were spent on local businesses versus non-local ones will help determine the impact of procurement on the local economy and the participation of local women-owned businesses.
- SMEs vs. Large Companies: This analysis has differentiated between spending on micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and large companies. Understanding this distribution has highlighted opportunities to support women-owned MSMEs.
- Goods, Services, and Works: Procurement spending have been classified by type – goods, services, and works. This breakdown helped to identify sectors where women-owned businesses may be underrepresented and opportunities to promote their participation.
- Type of Procurement Procedure: The spending was categorized by the type of procurement procedure used, such as direct agreement, open procedure, restricted procedure, etc. This analysis has shed light on how different procurement methods may affect the accessibility and fairness of opportunities for women-owned businesses.

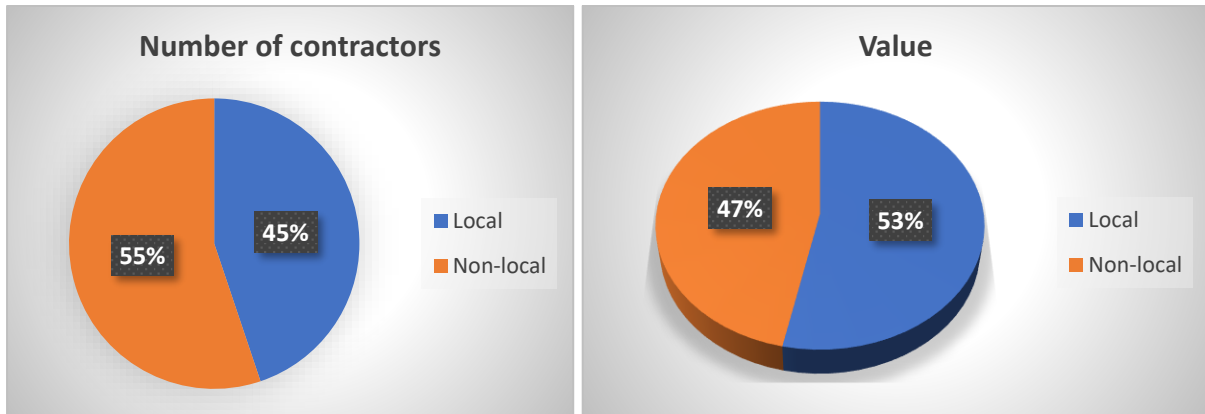
The data collection has focused on the main contracting authorities within Zenica-Doboj Canton, which include all government bodies and institutions, the Cantonal Hospital in Zenica, and the University of Zenica. These entities are the largest consumers and thus provide a substantial dataset for analysis.

The primary data source was the Public Procurement Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina's portal, where all contracting authorities are required to publish their procurement activities.

This portal has provided comprehensive and up-to-date information on procurement spending across the canton.

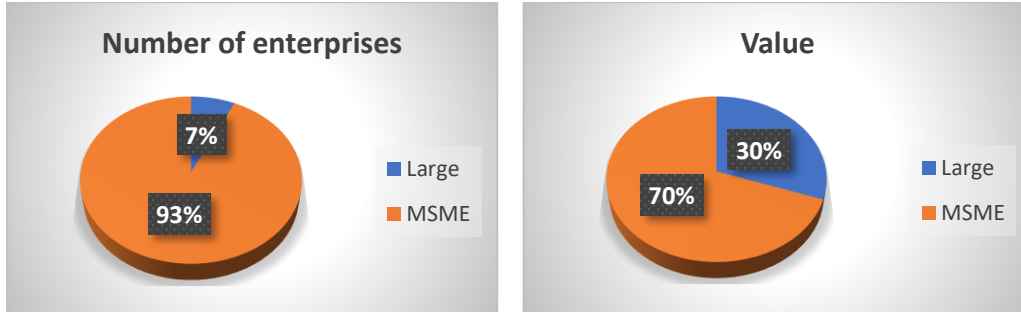
The graphic overview below shows the results of the analysis:

- Geographically distribution

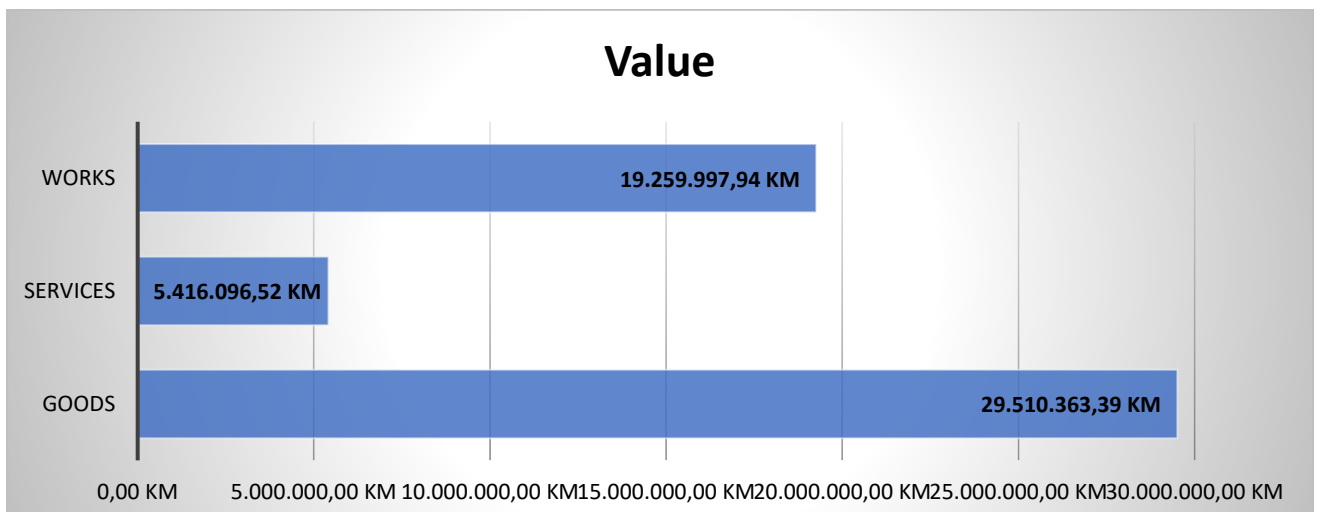


Contractor	Number of contractors	Value
Local	204	14.778.062,06 €
Non-local	251	12.904.025,77 €
Sum	455	27.682.078,83 €

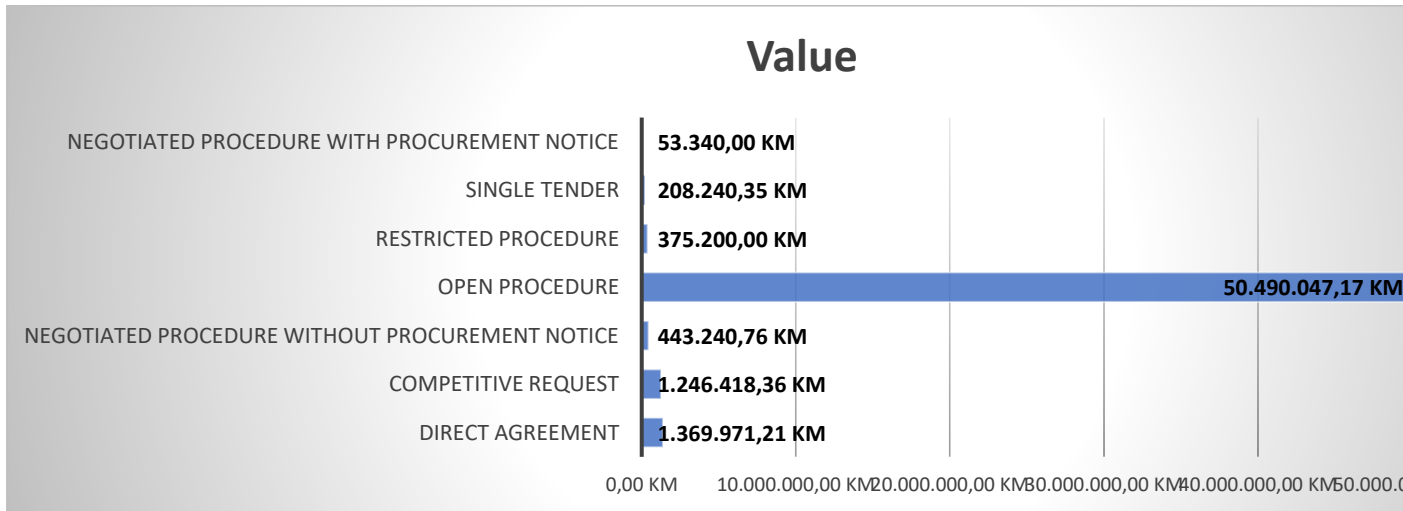
- Distribution by size of enterprise



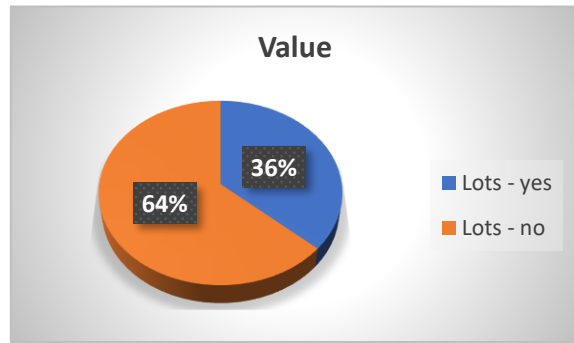
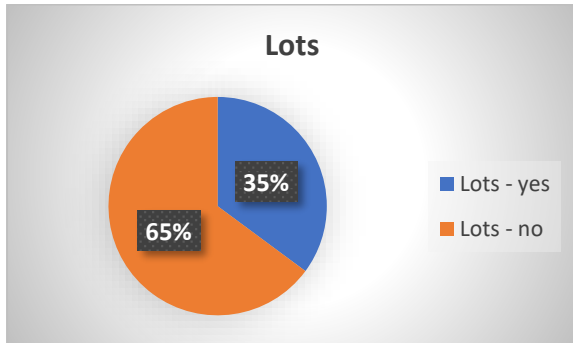
- Contract type



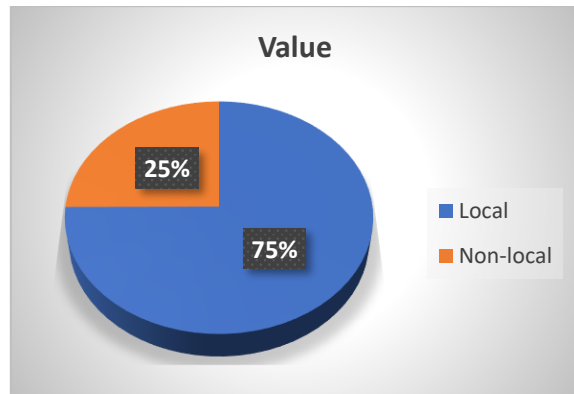
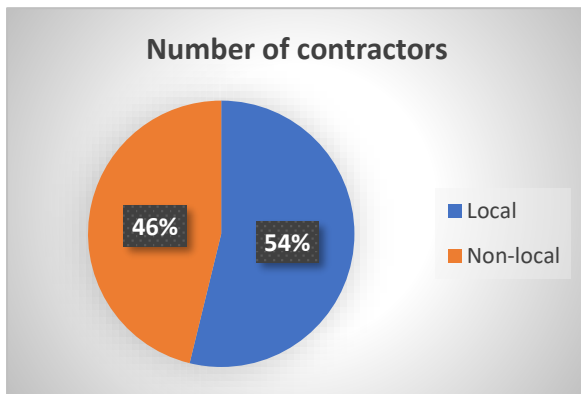
- Procedure type



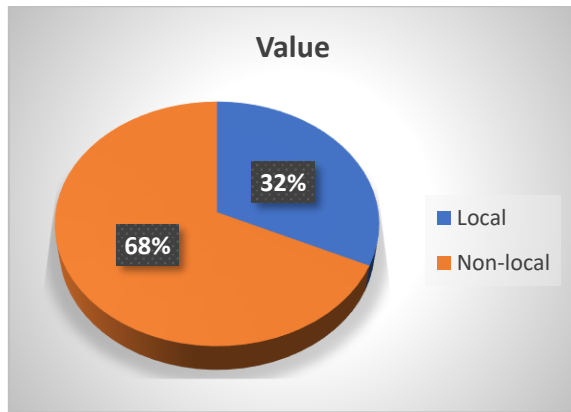
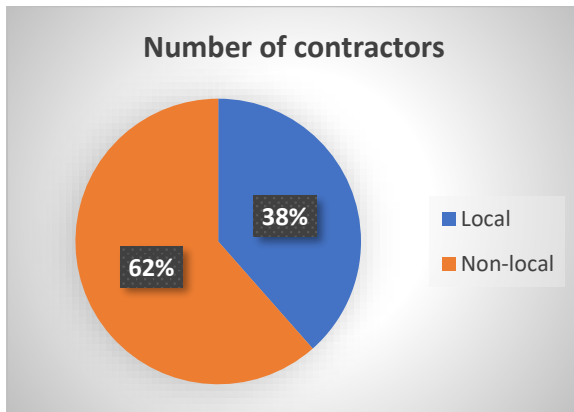
- Lots



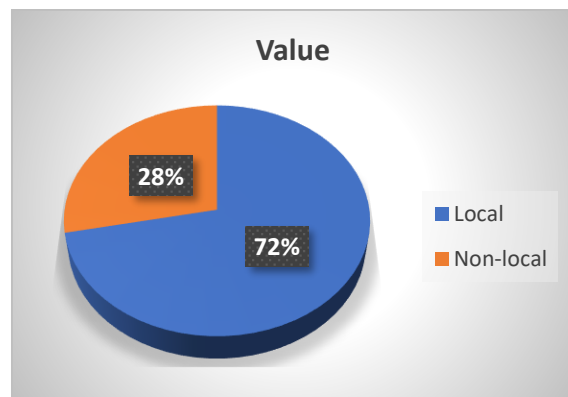
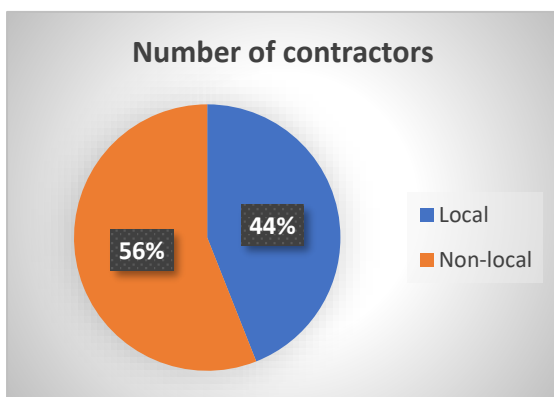
- Zenica-Doboj Canton government institutions



- Cantonal Hospital in Zenica



- University in Zenica



3.7.1.2 Creation of a working group for gender equality in public procurement findings

The goals and the structure of the working group have been suggested and they are as follows:

- **Identification of Key Participants:** Ensure representation from critical stakeholders, including procurement officers, gender equality specialists, and institutional representatives. This will guarantee that gender criteria are embedded in public procurement in alignment with local, national, and regional strategies on gender equality.
- **Policy and Practice Assessment:** Conduct an in-depth review of current public procurement policies and practices, emphasizing existing gender gaps. This assessment will create a foundation for developing gender-sensitive guidelines.
- **Engagement and Feedback Mechanism:** Facilitate meetings and workshops with various stakeholders, which include representative from the education sector (high school professor), a director of an NGO who operates in the sustainable tourism, a government public procurement official, a director of a consulting company and the representative of the DDIP ZDC to address challenges, exchange insights, and collaboratively design a comprehensive action plan.
- **Ongoing Evaluation and Adjustment:** Implement a continuous assessment process for the working group's guidelines, allowing for necessary refinements to optimize gender equality outcomes in public procurement.

The implementation of this action will be focused on the following expected outcomes:

- Development of a proposal for actionable gender-responsive procurement guidelines which will be aligned with national and regional gender policies, promoting equitable participation in procurement processes.
- Increased awareness among procurement officers and other public servants on gender equality principles and their importance within procurement.
- Improvement of transparency in procurement practices, ensuring that policies and actions support the goals of gender equality.

This structured approach aims to establish a replicable framework for gender equality in public procurement, contributing to fairer, more inclusive practices across Zenica-Doboj Canton.

Establishing the Foundations – Motivation and Methodology

Recognizing the growing relevance of gender equality in public procurement and leveraging the Zenica-Doboj Canton's membership in the GenProcure network, a small-scale action (SSA) was initiated to test the feasibility of forming a Working Group for Gender Equality in Public Procurement. This action aimed to explore realistic ways to embed gender considerations into local procurement practices.

The initiative began with desk research into Bosnia and Herzegovina's Public Procurement Law (2014) and entity-level Gender Equality Laws, benchmarking these against EU best practices. Insights gathered informed discussions at Urban Local Group (ULG) meetings, where the idea received support and volunteers for participation.

The methodology followed four phases:

1. Legal Mapping: A detailed review of legal frameworks to assess gender-related provisions.
2. Stakeholder Mapping: Selection of Working Group members from government, civil society, and procurement sectors.
3. Group Establishment: 1st meeting in April 2025 clarified objectives and created a shared vision.
4. Drafting Practical Tools: A one-page proposal with actionable gender-responsive clauses for tender documentation.

Key outcomes and insights – what worked and what we learned

The SSA successfully produced a tangible outcome—a concise, ready-to-use set of gender-related tender clauses. These include:

- Extra scoring for gender-equitable employment practices.
- Incentives for women-owned businesses.
- Gender-relevant technical specifications.

Beyond technical outputs, a significant impact was the change in mind-set among participants. Members who previously saw gender equality as abstract began understanding its operational relevance in procurement processes.

However, challenges emerged. While no legal barriers to gender criteria inclusion were found, the lack of formal mandates created hesitation among procurement officers. The SSA revealed

that without institutional endorsement, voluntary application of gender clauses might face limited uptake.

Sustainability and next steps

The pilot confirmed that gender-responsive procurement is both possible and practical within the current legal framework. To build on this success, the proposal developed by the Working Group will be shared more widely across institutions, accompanied by clear guidance for implementation. Informal advocacy with key stakeholders will help build support and raise awareness of the benefits, framing the approach as a tool for fairness and transparency rather than added complexity. A limited pilot of the proposed gender criteria in real tenders will provide practical examples and evidence of feasibility. Continued communication of these experiences will be essential to maintaining momentum and encouraging broader institutional uptake.

4. Overall Logic and Integrated Approach

This section outlines the strategic framework of the IAP, emphasizing a cohesive and integrated approach to advancing gender-responsive public procurement within the Zenica-Doboj Canton. The strategy is built upon a clear set of objectives, targeted areas of intervention, specific actions to be undertaken, and an assessment of integration to ensure comprehensive implementation. The strategic objectives and action areas of the Integrated Action Plan of GenProcure Network in ZDC have been shaped by testing activities.

4.1 The strategic objectives of the IAP.

The Integrated Action Plan of Zenica-Doboj canton outlines four strategic objectives that flow directly from the Section 3: Context, Needs, and Vision. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- **Strategic objective 1: Enhance gender equality in public procurement** – This is the primary objective of this IAP, and its primary objective is to integrate gender equality considerations into public procurement processes within the Zenica-Doboj Canton. This means that emphasis needs to be put on ensuring that procurement policies and practices actively promote gender equity, addressing disparities in representation, pay, and access to services.
- **Strategic objective 2: Building institutional capacity for gender responsive procurement** – This strategic objective deals with developing the necessary institutional frameworks and capacities to implement and monitor gender-responsive procurement practices. This can include various activities such as training programs for procurement officials, establishing guidelines, and creating monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and effectiveness.
- **Strategic objective 3: Promotion of economic empowerment for women** – Women empowerment being a very important factor in ensuring a gender-responsive public procurement, this objective aims to increase the participation of women in the labour market by leveraging public procurement as a tool for economic empowerment. This involves setting targets for female participation in contracts, supporting women-owned businesses, and ensuring fair labour practices in procurement activities.
- **Strategic objective 4: Foster collaborative and inclusive policy making** – Encouraging collaboration among various stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society, and the private sector is the main focus of this objective. This will provide conditions to create inclusive policies that support gender equality in public procurement including participatory decision-making processes and the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms for dialogue and action.

4.2 The overarching areas of intervention that will enable us to deliver our strategic objectives and vision.

To achieve these strategic objectives, the IAP identifies key areas of intervention that will enable the delivery of its vision which was defined in the previous Section. These areas are crucial for creating an environment where gender-responsive procurement can thrive. The areas of intervention include the following 4 areas:

- ❖ Aol 1 - Policy development and reform – This area of interest focuses on revising the existing procurement policies and procedures and try to include gender-responsive

criteria, encouraging the development of new policies that will promote gender equality, and at the same time ensure that they are in accordance with national and international gender equality standards.

- ❖ Aol 2 - Capacity building and training – Initiatives for creating an extensive training program for procurement officials and relevant stakeholders on gender-responsive procurement can also be emphasized as important areas of interest. These can include but not being limited on workshops, seminars, and online courses focused on integrating gender considerations into procurement processes.
- ❖ Aol 3 – Encouraging stakeholder engagement and collaboration – Stakeholder input is very valuable and by including local communities, women's organizations, and private sector with women-owned and women-led companies can be seen as a good tool to ensure a collaborative approach to gender-responsive procurement.
- ❖ Aol 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation – Establishing extensive and timely organized monitoring and evaluation frameworks can impact gender-responsive procurement initiatives. This can be referred to collection and data analysis and conducting regular assessments to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

4.3 The specific actions we will undertake in relation to each area of intervention and that will enable us to realise our strategic objectives and vision.

Specific actions within each area of intervention are very important for realizing the strategic objectives and vision of the IAP. These actions are drafted in order for them to be practical steps that should drive implementation and measurable outcomes. Each of the defined four specific actions has been further broken down to the following sub-actions:

AOI 1 – Policy Development and Reform:

- Action 1: Drafting a detailed review of procedures and procurement policies that already exist in order to identify gaps and opportunities for inserting gender-responsive measures.
- Action 2: Preparing a suggestion for new procurement guidelines which would include a “must” factor for the inclusion of gender equality criteria in public procurement processes.
- Action 3: Working on making local procurement policies in coherence with national and international frameworks on gender equality focusing on good EU practices

AOI 2 – Capacity Building and Training:

- Action 1: Development of trainings on gender-responsive procurement for public procurement officials and interested parties such as SME and NGO representatives.
- Action 2: Initiative to start a certification program for public procurement officers which should include training on gender equality.
- Action 3: Organisation and realisation of workshops and seminars to raise awareness about the importance of gender-responsive procurement.

AOI 3 – Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration:

- Action 1: Plan to secure digital space for dialogue and collaboration on gender-responsive procurement.

- Action 2: Establish cooperation with women-led organizations to better understand the challenges they face and include their feedback into procurement policies.
- Action 3: Encourage forming partnerships between the public sector and women-owned and women-managed businesses to enhance their confidence in the public procurement procedures.

AOI 4 – Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Action 1: Suggest introduction of a type of a data collection system to track progress and outcomes of gender-responsive procurement.
- Action 2: Conduct periodical evaluations of realised procedure in order to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement policies and practices and make adjustments if necessary.

4.4 Details on whether each Action selected is integrated.

The actions outlined in the previous sections are designed to be integrated both into the broader strategic objectives of the GenProcure network and the specific institutional context of Zenica-Doboj Canton. This integration aligns with URBACT's approach, which emphasizes coherent solutions based in local context and co-developed with stakeholders. Effective implementation of gender-responsive public procurement requires that each action is not only aligned with overall goals but also mutually reinforcing, avoiding fragmented efforts.

Policy development and reform are linked to national standards, ensuring legal coherence and institutional alignment. Capacity-building measures are suggested to be embedded within existing training structures for procurement staff, supporting long-term sustainability. Stakeholder engagement follows URBACT's participatory model, involving local actors in shaping and validating actions. Monitoring and evaluation are structured as a continuous learning cycle, enabling adaptation and responsiveness over time.

By integrating actions in this way—horizontally across policy, practice, and people, and vertically across local and transnational levels—this approach ensures that the IAP delivers on its ambition to embed gender equality meaningfully and systematically within procurement processes.

5. Action Planning Details

This section offers a detailed exploration of the 11 actions included in the plan, which are designed to address key priorities and advance our strategic objectives. Each action is accompanied by a clear link to its corresponding strategic objective, ensuring alignment with overarching goals. The section also outlines the specific tasks involved in each action, identifies key stakeholders and their roles, and provides insights into funding strategies and resource requirements.

In addition, this part highlights the implementation timelines, with step-by-step details of planned activities across different phases, and specifies monitoring mechanisms, including output and result indicators, to track progress and outcomes effectively. By bringing together all these elements, this section ensures a coherent and actionable framework, paving the way for systematic progress and informed decision-making.

5.1. Action Planning Tables

Action Letter	Action Name		
A	Drafting a detailed review of procedures and procurement policies that already exist in order to identify gaps and opportunities for inserting gender-responsive measures.		
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying relevant procedures and policies by collecting and organizing available data on existing procedures and procurement policies from relevant departments Analysing procedures and identifying gaps and potential areas for gender-responsive improvement Drafting a detailed review report 			
Link to strategic objective	Strategic objective 1 – Enhance gender equality in public procurement		
Related area of Intervention	AOI 1 - Policy Development and Reform		
Responsibilities			
Lead	Why	Partners	Role
Cities/municipalities of ZDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key players in local governance and procurement Directly involved in PP processes Well-positioned to lead the review of existing policies Implement procurement frameworks 	Government of Zenica-Doboj Canton	Providing necessary data to complete the review of PP
		Local public companies	Providing experts and a point of view of procurers while taking part in PPs
		Local NGOs	Providing inputs from the NGO sector and their view

				from the NGO sector	
Contact details:					
Implementation timeframe					
Q1 start date: January 2026			Q4 end date: December 2026		
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Specific tasks	Identifying relevant procedures and policies by collecting and organizing available data on existing procedures and procurement policies from relevant departments	Analysing procedures and identifying gaps and potential areas for gender-responsive improvement	Analysing procedures and identifying gaps and potential areas for gender-responsive improvement	Drafting a detailed review report	
Costings			Resources		
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €		Resources secured	
Human Resources (Consultants/Experts)	4.500,00	9.500,00		6.000,00	
Data Collection and Processing	1.500,00				3.500,00
Project Management and Coordination	2.000,00			Funding source(s)	
Stakeholder Consultations/Workshops	1.500,00			Municipal budgets, ZDC Government	Donor support/funds, ZDC municipalities
Monitoring of delivery					
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)		
Compilation of a policy/procedure inventory from all relevant departments.	Internal inventory tracking sheet Confirmation of completeness Reports on collected documents	January 2026	February 2026		
A detailed gap analysis identifying at least 2 areas for gender-responsive improvements.	Analytical documentation identifying gaps and recommendations Peer review Reference to specific procedures in the final report	January 2026	June 2026		
A comprehensive review report of existing	Review and approval of the draft and final report;	January 2026	November 2026		

procedures and procurement policies, with gender lens applied	Quality assessment using a checklist;		
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)
Relevant procurement procedures across all departments are systematically documented and accessible	Inventory log quarterly revised Spot checks of document availability	January 2026	February 2026
Gender-related gaps in procurement procedures are clearly identified and form the basis for proposed reforms	Gap analysis matrix Validation by gender experts Stakeholder review meeting minutes	January 2026	June 2026
Decision-makers provided with a gender-responsive analysis of procurement policies to work on making policy updates	Final report submission Post-report feedback survey from relevant policy makers	January 2026	November 2026
Risk assessment			
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Limited access to or poor documentation of existing procurement procedures	Medium	High	Early coordination with departments to secure access Usage of formal requests and leadership support to ensure cooperation
Lack of gender expertise among staff involved in analysis	Medium	High	Engagement of gender experts or NGOs from the beginning Providing a short training on gender-responsive procurement
Final recommendations not being used in policy reform or planning	Medium/high	High	Involve key decision-makers in earlier stages Present findings in an simple format with clear follow-up steps Link results to ongoing policy initiatives

Action Letter		Action Name						
B		Preparing a suggestion for new procurement guidelines which would include a “must” factor for the inclusion of gender equality criteria in public procurement processes.						
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining gender equality criteria with consultations with experts and taking into consideration other factors Developing a draft of the new guidelines Developing the final version of the new guidelines 								
Link to strategic objective		Strategic objective 1 – Enhance gender equality in public procurement						
Related area of Intervention		AOI 1 - Policy Development and Reform						
Responsibilities								
Lead			Why		Partners		Role	
Regional development agency			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses on promoting economic development and improving the quality of life Possesses relevant expertise in various development sectors Can effectively coordinate the efforts of different stakeholders and ensure that the IAP aligns with the canton's overall development goals 		Local development agencies (of each city or Municipality)		Can deliver programs and provide expertise and can mobilize resources	
					Cantonal relevant ministries		Provide resources and implementing policies by providing coordination efforts	
					Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in relevant sectors		Can represent communities and advocate for changes	
					Businesses and business support organisations		Can provide contribution in expertise and information from the situation	
Contact details:								
Implementation timeframe								
Q1 start date: January 2027					Q8 end date: December 2028			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific tasks	Defining gender equality criteria with consultations with	Defining gender equality criteria with consultations with	Developing a draft of the new guidelines	Developing a draft of the new guidelines	Developing a draft of the new guidelines	Developing a draft of the new guidelines	Developing the final version of the	Developing the final version of the

	experts and taking into consideration other factors	experts and taking into consideration other factors					new guidelines	new guidelines
Costings					Resources			
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured	Resources needed				
Expert consultants: gender and procurement experts	4.000,00	7.500,00	3.000,00	4.500,00				
Stakeholder meetings/w workshops	2.000,00							
Drafting and finalizing guidelines	1.500,00		Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)				
			Cantonal Ministry funds	Public sector contributions, donor funds				
Monitoring of delivery								
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring		Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)				
Defined gender equality criteria for PP in the draft procurement guidelines document	Records of expert consultations, document approval Internal review logs		January 2027	June 2027				
Suggested final version of procurement guidelines	Document validation by an independent commission		June 2027	December 2027				
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring		Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)				
Gender equality considerations are formally defined and institutionalized in procurement planning	Inclusion of criteria in official guidance Confirmation from ministries/stakeholders possibly via MoUs		January 2027	June 2028				
Decision-makers	Finalized document submitted to ministries		June 2028	December 2028				

equipped with a guideline that suggests gender criteria in procurement	Presented in dissemination workshop		
Risk assessment			
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Resistance from procurement bodies or ministries toward including mandatory gender criteria	Medium	High	Early engagement and sensitization workshops; emphasize legal and policy alignment
Insufficient gender expertise in defining criteria	Medium	High	Hire experienced consultants; involve NGOs with proven track records

Action Letter		Action Name				
C		Working on making local procurement policies in coherence with national and international frameworks on gender equality focusing on good EU practices				
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify national and international frameworks and comparing the existing local procurement policies Develop proposed amendments with coordination and consultation with relevant stakeholders 						
Link to strategic objective		Strategic objective 1 – Enhance gender equality in public procurement				
Related area of Intervention		AOI 1 - Policy Development and Reform				
Responsibilities						
Lead		Why		Partners		Role
Cities/municipalities of ZDC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for local governance and procurement procedures Can do monitoring of the realised procurement frameworks 		Business sector – companies SMEs		Provide expertise, resources, and participate in implementation.
				Academic Institutions		Conduct research, provide analysis, and educate stakeholders
				Local NGOs		Provide advocacy, and implement programs
Contact details:						
Implementation timeframe						
Q1 start date: January 2026				Q6 end date: June 2027		
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Specific tasks	Identify national and international frameworks and comparing the existing local procurement policies	Identify national and international framework and comparing the existing local procurement policies	Develop proposed amendments with coordination and consultation with relevant stakeholders	Develop proposed amendments with coordination and consultation with relevant stakeholders	Develop proposed amendments with coordination and consultation with relevant stakeholders	Develop proposed amendments with coordination and consultation with relevant stakeholders
Costings				Resources		
Cost category	Amount in €		Total cost in €	Resources secured		Resources needed

Expert research and policy review by a comparative analysis of national, international, and EU frameworks	3.500,00	7.200,00	2.500,00	4.700,00
Stakeholder coordination & consultation	2.000,00			
Proposal dissemination	1.700,00		Funding source(s) Academic institutions, donor funds	Funding source(s) Regional development support, local governments
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
A comparative analysis of national, international and EU frameworks against completed local PPs	Finalized analytical report, peer-reviewed or approved by academic/NGO partners	January 2026	September 2026	
A set of proposed amendments to local PPs developed with stakeholder input	Draft proposals with stakeholder validation logs and official submission records	January 2026	June 2027	
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
Local procurement policies are informed by international, national and EU gender equality frameworks	Progress reports Peer reviews/academic validation	January 2026	September 2026	
Municipalities equipped with proposed policy amendments for gender-responsive PPs	Stakeholder meeting minutes and feedback logs Proposal for adoption by local councils	January 2026	June 2027	
Risk assessment				
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation foreseen	measures

Lack of alignment between local and national legal frameworks	Medium	High	Involve legal experts in the beginning phases and align recommendations with both local needs and legal feasibility
Lack of capacity at municipal level to interpret and implement suggested changes	Medium	High	Include capacity-building elements in the final proposal; partner with academic institutions

Action Letter		Action Name		
A		Development of trainings on gender-responsive procurement for public procurement officials and interested parties such as SME and NGO representatives		
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop training modules and resources that focus on integrating gender equity principles into procurement processes, tailored to public procurement officials, SMEs, and NGOs. Organize and deliver training sessions that provide interactive learning, ensuring participants understand and can apply gender-responsive procurement practices. 				
Link to strategic objective		Strategic objective 2: Building institutional capacity for gender responsive procurement		
Related area of Intervention		AOI 2 - Capacity Building and Training		
Responsibilities				
Lead		Why	Partners	Role
Local NGOs dealing with gender issues and education with additional engagement of external experts in the field		Expert capacities in knowledge, bringing insights from the relevant fields Support implementing gender-responsive practices	Cities/Municipalities in Zenica-Doboj Canton	Raise awareness of gender-responsive procurement as a best practice
			Local Chambers of Commerce	Assist in connecting SMEs with training opportunities
Contact details:				
Implementation timeframe				
Q1 start date: July 2028			Q4 end date: June 2029	
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Specific tasks	Develop training modules and resources that focus on integrating gender equity principles into procurement processes, tailored to public procurement officials, SMEs, and NGOs.	Develop training modules and resources that focus on integrating gender equity principles into procurement processes, tailored to public procurement officials, SMEs, and NGOs.	Organize and deliver training sessions that provide interactive learning, ensuring participants understand and can apply gender-responsive procurement practices.	Organize and deliver training sessions that provide interactive learning, ensuring participants understand and can apply gender-responsive procurement practices.
Costings			Resources	
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured	Resources needed
Development of training modules	4.000,00		5.000,00	7.000,00
Experienced trainers and	5.000,00			

facilitators in gender and procurement (fees)		12.000,00		
Training delivery (venues, logistics)	3.000,00		Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)
			Municipal support Government budgets	Local Government support, donors, EU project funds
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
Gender-responsive procurement training modules and resources developed	Completion and internal review of training materials	July 2028	December 2028	
At least 2 training sessions delivered to public procurement officials, SMEs, NGOs	Participant lists, training attendance logs, session feedback forms for at least 2 realised training sessions	July 2028	June 2029	
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
Training participants have increased knowledge of gender-responsive procurement practices	Pre- and post-training assessments; participant surveys	July 2028	June 2029	
Local institutions and SMEs demonstrate improved readiness to apply gender principles in procurement	Follow-up surveys/interviews; references to training materials in procurement planning	July 2028	June 2029	
Risk assessment				
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen	
Limited participation from SMEs or public officials due to time/resource constraints	Medium	Medium	Schedule flexibly; offer hybrid/online options; partner with Chambers to incentivize SMEs	



Lack of long-term impact or application of training in real procurement scenarios	Medium	Medium	Conduct follow-up support or refresher workshops; offer post-training mentoring
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Action Letter		Action Name						
B		Initiative to start a certification program for public procurement officers which should include training on gender equality.						
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design the certification structure and develop a curriculum indicating modules on gender equality and gender-responsive procurement aligned with procurement regulations Engagement relevant stakeholders to secure support and promotion 								
Link to strategic objective		Strategic objective 2: Building institutional capacity for gender responsive procurement						
Related area of Intervention		AOI 2 - Capacity Building and Training						
Responsibilities								
Lead		Why		Partners		Role		
Business support organisations		Support in program planning and provide insight on gender-responsive policies.		Local Universities and Training Institutes		Prepare certification initiatives for local public procurement officers and support participation		
				Local NGOs		Advocate certification program, provide feedback on gender equality needs from community perspective.		
Contact details:								
Implementation timeframe								
Q1 start date: January 2027					Q8 end date: December 2028			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific tasks	Design the certification structure and develop a curriculum indicating modules on gender equality and gender-responsive	Design the certification structure and develop a curriculum indicating modules on gender equality and gender-responsive procurement aligned with procurement regulations	Design the certification structure and develop a curriculum indicating modules on gender equality and gender-responsive	Design the certification structure and develop a curriculum indicating modules on gender equality and gender-responsive	Engage relevant stakeholders to secure support and promotion	Engage relevant stakeholders to secure support and promotion	Engage relevant stakeholders to secure support and promotion	Engage relevant stakeholders to secure support and promotion

	procurement aligned with procurement regulations		procurement aligned with procurement regulations	procurement aligned with procurement regulations				
Costings				Resources				
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €		Resources secured		Resources needed		
Meetings with institutions, outreach	4.500,00	14.500,00		6.000,00		8.500,00		
Stakeholder coordination and promotion	2.000,00							
Design of certification framework and gender-responsive training modules	5.000,00			Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)			
Pilot training and testing	3.000,00			Universities, Business Support Organizations	Donors (EU funds from projects), Local governments			
Monitoring of delivery								
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring		Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)				
Stakeholder engagement conducted to support and promote certification program	Stakeholder consultation reports Progress reports and update briefs		January 2027	December 2028				
Certification and curriculum developed with integrated gender-responsive modules	Curriculum review and validation sessions Progress reports and update briefs		January 2027	June 2028				
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring		Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)				

Institutions express support and plan implementation of trainings and certification standards	Formal commitments or inclusion in HR/training plans; follow-up surveys	January 2027	December 2028
Public procurement officers have access to a gender-responsive certification program	Track support and feedback from engaged entities via periodical reports	January 2027	June 2028

Risk assessment

Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Difficulty integrating gender content into formal certification standards	Medium	Medium	Involve gender experts and legal advisors in curriculum design; compare with international models
Limited participation in pilot certification phase	Low–Medium	Medium	Offering pilot incentives (e.g. recognition, visibility) Involve public procurement authorities
Lack of institutional interest in adopting certification for procurement officers	Medium	High	Secure early-on support through co-design process; Alignment with public HR and professional development policies

Action Letter	Action Name			
C	Organisation and realisation of workshops and seminars to raise awareness about the importance of gender-responsive procurement.			
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop workshop and seminar content that highlights the benefits, challenges, and best practices of gender-responsive procurement. Organize workshops to ensure diverse participation from different stakeholders providing practical tools and resources to support gender equality in procurement. 				
Link to strategic objective	Strategic objective 2: Building institutional capacity for gender responsive procurement			
Related area of Intervention	AOI 2 - Capacity Building and Training			
Responsibilities				
Lead	Why	Partners	Role	
Local Universities and Training Institutes	Expertise delivering educational work Qualified staff and resources to develop high-quality content Practical knowledge in gender studies and public procurement Engage a broad audience ensuring training materials and methodologies are impactful and research-based	Chamber of Economy Zenica-Doboj Canton	Engage SMEs in the workshops, promoting gender-responsive procurement as a strategic business practice.	
		Relevant NGOs and SMEs	Act as workshop participants, share experiences, and support advocacy of gender-responsive practices.	
Contact details:				
Implementation timeframe				
Q1 start date: July 2027			Q4 end date: June 2028	
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Specific tasks	Develop workshop and seminar content that highlights the benefits, challenges, and best practices of gender-responsive procurement.	Organize workshops to ensure diverse participation from different stakeholders providing practical tools and resources to support gender	Organize workshops to ensure diverse participation from different stakeholders providing practical tools and resources to support gender equality in procurement.	Organize workshops to ensure diverse participation from different stakeholders providing practical tools and resources to support gender equality in procurement.

		equality in procurement.		
Costings			Resources	
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured	Resources needed
Content development for workshops	4.000,00	14.000,00	0,00	14.000,00
Workshop logistics and venues	4.500,00			
Trainers and facilitators	3.000,00			
Monitoring, evaluation and documentation	2.500,00			
			Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)
				Local government support, SME support programs, Government partnerships, donor funds
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
Workshop and seminar content developed on gender-responsive procurement	Curriculum materials approved by universities; internal content review checklist	July 2027	September 2028	
Workshops organized with diverse stakeholder participation, including SMEs and NGOs	Attendance records, participant profiles, photos, feedback forms	July 2027	June 2028	
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
Stakeholders demonstrate increased awareness of gender-responsive procurement	Pre- and post-event surveys assessing knowledge and perception change	July 2027	September 2028	
SMEs and NGOs are more actively engaged in discussions and practices related to gender in procurement	Feedback sessions, post-workshop commitments, event follow-ups with participants	July 2027	June 2028	

Risk assessment			
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Difficulty translating abstract gender concepts into actionable insights	Medium	Medium	Use practical examples and tools in content Employ experienced facilitators
Low participation from SMEs or civil society actors due to lack of interest or time	Medium	High	Promote early Partner with Chambers and NGOs for outreach Offer flexible formats

Action Letter		Action Name		
A		Plan to secure digital space for dialogue and collaboration on gender-responsive procurement		
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated email group for all relevant stakeholders and set up a shared document folder to store and access resources on gender-responsive procurement. • Schedule quarterly online meetings or round tables to discuss updates and address challenges in gender-responsive procurement. • Propose assigning a coordinator to manage the email group, send periodic updates, and encourage stakeholders to share resources, success stories, and questions with the group. 				
Link to strategic objective		Strategic objective 3: Foster collaborative and inclusive policy making		
Related area of Intervention		AOI 3 - Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration		
Responsibilities				
Lead		Why	Partners	Role
Local NGOs which focus on society engagement and improvement		Relevant expertise to manage and oversee the communication and organisation of meetings	Cities/municipalities of ZDC	Providing data on current status and relevant updates
			Local community representatives	Engagement of stakeholders from various sectors to provide inputs
			Relevant ministries of ZDC	Sharing know-how on procedures and any changes in legal sense
Contact details:				
Implementation timeframe				
Q1 start date: July 2028			Q4 end date: June 2029	
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Specific tasks	Create a dedicated email group for all relevant stakeholders and set up a shared document folder to store and access resources on gender-responsive procurement.	Schedule quarterly online meetings or round tables to discuss updates and address challenges in gender-responsive procurement.	Propose assigning a coordinator to manage the email group, send periodic updates, and encourage stakeholders to share resources, success stories, and questions with the group.	Schedule quarterly online meetings or round tables to discuss updates and address challenges in gender-responsive procurement.
Costings			Resources	

Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured	Resources needed
Platform setup (email group, shared drive)	1.500,00	5.200,00	2.500,00	2.700,00
Online coordination and content management	2.000,00			
Outreach and stakeholder engagement	1.700,00			
			Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)
			Local Ministries, Donors,	Local community programs, Civil society initiatives, Municipal ICT departments
Monitoring of delivery				
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
At least 3 online meetings/roundtables conducted for collaboration and information exchange	Meeting agendas, attendance records, summary notes	July 2028	June 2029	
Digital communication platform established	Confirmation of email group + drive setup; test emails sent	July 2028	September 2028	
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)	
Stakeholders actively use the digital space to exchange knowledge on gender-responsive procurement	Activity logs, email traffic volume, shared document usage reports	July 2028	June 2029	
Stakeholders report improved collaboration and access to updates related to gender-responsive procurement	End-of-project stakeholder survey, feedback from meetings	July 2028	September 2028	
Risk assessment				
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen	
Technical difficulties in accessing or maintaining the digital tools	Low-Medium	Medium	Use widely available, user-friendly platforms (Google Drive, mailing lists); provide basic support	
Lack of commitment to maintaining communication over time	Medium	Medium	Assign a proactive coordinator; set clear expectations on update frequency	

Action Letter	Action Name							
B	Establish cooperation with women-led organizations to better understand the challenges they face and include their feedback into procurement policies.							
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a communication list of women-led organizations/businesses and NGOs in ZDC and invite them to participate in discussions on procurement challenges. • Organize focus groups to gather structured feedback on specific challenges in procurement policies. • Review and summarize the feedback, working with relevant stakeholders to identify actionable policy changes that reflect the needs of women-led organizations. 								
Link to strategic objective	Strategic objective 3: Promotion of economic empowerment for women							
Related area of Intervention	AOI 3 - Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration							
Responsibilities								
Lead	Why			Partners			Role	
Women-led SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring first-hand experience with the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in procurement - commitment to inclusive, bottom-up policy development - work closely with the public sector to can help facilitate resources, networking, and integration of feedback into policy recommendations 			Local Women's Organizations and NGOs Focused on Gender Equality Chamber of Economy Zenica-Doboj Canton			Provide insights into the specific challenges women-led organizations face in PP Offer recommendations based on their experiences To help connect with women-led businesses and provide a platform for gathering feedback from the business community.	
Contact details:								
Implementation timeframe								
Q1 start date: January 2027					Q10 end date: June 2029			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Specific	Create a communication list of women-led	Organize focus groups	Organize focus	Organize focus	Review and summarize	Create a communication list of women-led	Organize focus	Organize focus

tasks	organizations/ businesses and NGOs in ZDC		groups	groups	receive the feedback	organizations /businesses and NGOs in ZDC	users groups	users groups
Quarter	Q9	Q10						
Specific tasks	Organize focus groups	Review and summarize the feedback						
Costings					Resources			
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured		Resources needed			
Personnel and Coordination	6.000,00	13.500,00	5.000,00		8.500,00			
Community engagement	4.500,00							
Communication and promotion outreach	3.000,00		Funding source(s)		Funding source(s)			
			Local Women's NGOs and SMEs Chamber of Economy Zenica- Doboj Canton for coordination support, Public sector stakeholders		Donor funding (UN Women, EU Gender Equality fund) Government grants, Private foundations supporting women's entrepreneurship			
Monitoring of delivery								
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring		Baseline (Date:)		Target (Date:?)			
Number of women-led organizations engaged in consultations	Attendance sheets, email communications		January 2027		June 2029			
Number of focus groups organized	Event reports, agendas, participant lists		January 2027		March 2029			
Number of policy recommendatio	Final report, minutes from stakeholder meetings		January 2027		June 2029			

ns submitted based on consultations			
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)
Improved representation of women-led businesses in procurement policy development	Stakeholder survey results, policy updates	January 2027	June 2029
Increased satisfaction among women-led businesses with procurement processes	Pre/post feedback survey of participants	January 2027	June 2029
Risk assessment			
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Low participation from women-led organizations	Medium	High	Outreach via NGOs and Chamber of Economy; provide incentives such as visibility/promotion
Limited availability of funding to run focus groups	High	Medium	Early fundraising, seek co-financing or in-kind support combined sessions with trainings
Resistance to policy changes from existing procurement bodies	Medium	High	Involve stakeholders early in the process, present evidence-based recommendations

Action Letter	Action Name		
C	Encourage forming partnerships between the public sector and women-owned and women-managed businesses to enhance their confidence in the public procurement procedures.		
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a mentorship initiative pairing public procurement officers with representatives from women-owned SMEs, offering practical guidance on navigating public procurement. • Collaborate with partners to draft guidelines on forming public-private partnerships with women-owned businesses, focusing on inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility. 			
Link to strategic objective	Strategic objective 3: Promotion of economic empowerment for women		
Related area of Intervention	AOI 3 - Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration		
Responsibilities			
Lead	Why	Partners	Role
Chamber of Economy Zenica-Doboj Canton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - central hub connecting businesses and public sector entities well-positioned to facilitate partnerships - provide ongoing support to build trust between women-owned businesses and public procurement officials 	Public Procurement Offices of ZDC Municipalities	engage directly with women-owned businesses, demonstrating transparency and providing guidance on procurement processes to foster confidence and understanding
		Local Women-Owned and Women-Managed SMEs	To participate as key partners, sharing feedback on the challenges they face and proposing ways that partnerships with the public sector can improve their procurement opportunities.
Contact details:			
Implementation timeframe			

Q1 start date: January 2028			Q6 end date: June 2029			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Specific tasks	Create a mentorship initiative pairing public procurement officers with representatives from women-owned SMEs, offering practical guidance on navigating public procurement.	Create a mentorship initiative pairing public procurement officers with representatives from women-owned SMEs, offering practical guidance on navigating public procurement.	Create a mentorship initiative pairing public procurement officers with representatives from women-owned SMEs, offering practical guidance on navigating public procurement.	Collaborate with partners to draft guidelines on forming public-private partnerships with women-owned businesses, focusing on inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility.	Collaborate with partners to draft guidelines on forming public-private partnerships with women-owned businesses, focusing on inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility.	Collaborate with partners to draft guidelines on forming public-private partnerships with women-owned businesses, focusing on inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility.
Costings			Resources			
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured		Resources needed	
Strategic coordination and personnel	8.000,00	16.400,00	5.000,00		11.400,00	
Stakeholder engagement and logistics	6.300,00					
Communication, promotion and reporting activities	2.100,00		Funding source(s)		Funding source(s)	
			Public sector (local government/municipal government)		Project-specific grants-from gender equality funds	
Monitoring of delivery						
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring		Baseline (Date:)		Target (Date:?)	
Number of targeted women-led organizations	Attendance records, meeting logs, email communications		March 2028		December 2028	

engaged in consultations			
Number of focus groups conducted	Event reports, participant lists, session minutes	January 2028	July 2028
Number of drafted policy recommendations based on stakeholder feedback	Draft reports, meeting minutes, final submissions	June 2028	June 2029
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)
Enhanced inclusion of women-led organizations in policy-making processes	Stakeholder surveys, review of updated policies	March 2028	December 2028
Increased satisfaction with the procurement process among women-led organizations	Pre- and post-engagement surveys, feedback reports	June 2028	June 2029
Risk assessment			
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Insufficient funding for key engagement activities	High	Medium	Initiate early fundraising activities and pursue complementary grants.
Resistance to policy changes by established procurement bodies	Medium	High	Engage key stakeholders early in the process and ensure continuous dialogue.

Action Letter		Action Name				
A		Suggest introduction of a type of a data collection system to track progress and outcomes of gender-responsive procurement activities				
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with partners to determine metrics that will track the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement. Work with the IT Department to design a prototype data collection system 						
Link to strategic objective		Strategic objective 4: Foster collaborative and inclusive policy making				
Related area of Intervention		AOI 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation				
Responsibilities						
Lead		Why	Partners		Role	
Relevant departments within the ZDC government		Departments that manage procurement activities and is familiar with the technical and regulatory environment of the public procurement portal. - to ensure compatibility with existing systems and manage data integration effectively.	Academic/education institutions in ZDC		help with the development of data analysis models, evaluating the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement over time and providing research support to understand long-term trends.	
			Public Procurement Regulatory Authority		Provide oversight and ensure that the proposed system aligns with national procurement regulations and contributes to the wider policy goals for gender equality in public procurement.	
Contact details:						
Implementation timeframe						
Q1 start date: October 2028			Q6 end date: March 2030			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Specific tasks	Collaborate with partners to	Collaborate with partners to	Collaborate with partners to	Work with the IT Department	Work with the IT Department	Work with the IT Department

	determine metrics that will track the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement	determine metrics that will track the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement	determine metrics that will track the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement	nt to design a prototype data collection system	to design a prototype data collection system	t to design a prototype data collection system
Costings			Resources			
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured	Resources needed		
System prototype design and testing	4.600,00	9.100,00	3.500,00	5.600,00		
Training and user on-boarding	2.100,00		Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)		
Implementation and technical support	2.400,00		Government funding, donor programs	Donor support		
Monitoring of delivery						
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)			
Prototype of the data collection system designed and integrated	Prototype report, usability test feedback, system compatibility validation	October 2028	December 2029			
Training conducted for procurement officials on the new system	Training attendance, feedback forms, and post-training knowledge checks	October 2028	March 2030			
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)			
Institutions have an operational system to monitor gender-responsive procurement performance	System activity reports, data submissions from pilot entities	October 2028	December 2029			
Public procurement officials demonstrate the ability to use the data system	Post-training assessments, evaluation reports on	October 2028	March 2030			

effectively tracking outcomes	for data entry and use quality		
Risk assessment			
Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Resistance or slow adoption by procurement officials	Medium	Medium	Provide hands-on, practical training; designate local "champions" to support peer on-boarding

Action Letter	Action Name		
B	Conduct periodical evaluations of realised procedure in order to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement policies and practices and make adjustments if necessary.		
Description of specific tasks necessary to complete this activity			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining clear, measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement practices. Gathering data on procurement outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and policy impacts, using interviews and system data from the procurement portal Review the findings, identify trends or areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to adjust or refine procurement policies to better support gender-responsive goals. 			
Link to strategic objective	Strategic objective 4: Foster collaborative and inclusive policy making		
Related area of Intervention	AOI 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation		
Responsibilities			
Lead	Why	Partners	Role
Public Procurement Departments within the ministries of Zenica-Doboj Canton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees procurement procedures in the canton, making it the most suitable organization to evaluate the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement policies Expertise in procurement processes and can assess the integration of gender criteria in procedures. 	Chamber of Economy Zenica-Doboj Canton	Represent the interests of local businesses and SMEs in the evaluation process provide data on the participation of these businesses in PPs and highlight any barriers they face
		Cities/municipalities of ZDC	Providing relevant procurement data and information
		Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) focused on Gender Equality Role	Monitoring and advocating for gender equality in procurement processes gathering data on the practical impacts of gender-responsive procurement and identify gaps or challenges
Contact details:			
Implementation timeframe			

Q1 start date: January 2029			Q5 end date: March 2030		
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Specific tasks	Defining clear, measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement practices.	Gathering data on procurement outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and policy impacts, using interviews and system data from the procurement portal	Gathering data on procurement outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and policy impacts, using interviews and system data from the procurement portal	Review the findings, identify trends or areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to adjust or refine procurement policies to better support gender-responsive goals.	Review the findings, identify trends or areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to adjust or refine procurement policies to better support gender-responsive goals.
Costings			Resources		
Cost category	Amount in €	Total cost in €	Resources secured	Resources needed	
Data collection via interviews, analysis	4.000,00	9.000,00	3.500,00	5.500,00	
Stakeholder consultations	1.500,00		Funding source(s)	Funding source(s)	
Evaluation report development	3.500,00		Donor funds, government budgets	Government incentives, Local and regional Chamber of Economy projects	
Monitoring of delivery					
Output indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)		
Comprehensive evaluation conducted using qualitative and quantitative data	Survey/interview data collection logs Evaluation progress reports	January 2029	December 2029		
Report with recommendations for policy or procedural improvements completed	Report findings Submission log, peer or expert review	January 2029	March 2030		
Result indicator	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date:)	Target (Date:?)		

Institutions use data from evaluation to adapt or refine PPs	Policy planning documents, stakeholder interviews	January 2029	March 2030
Improved understanding of GRP implementation effectiveness among stakeholders	Pre/post evaluation surveys stakeholder feedback sessions	January 2029	March 2030

Risk assessment

Implementation risk/challenges	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measures foreseen
Lack of access to relevant procurement data	Medium	High	Engage IT and procurement units early; secure necessary access permissions
Low stakeholder participation in interviews and consultations	Medium	Medium	Schedule interviews with flexibility; leverage trusted partners to encourage participation
Disagreement on indicators or evaluation methodology	Medium	Medium	Facilitate inclusive, expert-led workshops for consensus building
Findings are not used to improve future procurement practices	Medium	High	Present findings in actionable formats; host policy dialogue sessions with decision-makers

6. Implementation Framework

6.1. Details of the governance mechanisms and processes for implementing the IAP.

The governance of the Integrated Action Plan for Gender-Responsive Public Procurement in Zenica-Doboj Canton will be structured around a multilevel and collaborative model to ensure continuity and strong institutional support. The complex structure of governance within Zenica-Doboj Canton the implementation it is not possible to assign a department and government body to monitor the implementation of the IAP. However, a coordination team which could consist of DDIP ZDC employees might be assigned to follow up and monitoring activities.

The Coordination Team could convene bi-annual implementation meetings to track progress, address challenges, and coordinate across stakeholders. Additionally, relevant task groups—such as the Working Group for Gender Equality in Public Procurement—are encouraged to remain active to support specific thematic areas and ensure technical guidance.

To maintain stakeholder engagement, transparency, and political accountability progress updates would be shared with the Cantonal Government and key ministries through quarterly internal reports. Annual semi-public reports could be made available and shared with municipal councils and the public. Periodic stakeholder meetings and workshops could be held to inform and involve citizens, NGOs, women-led organizations, and the business sector. This governance model will ensure that the IAP remains a living and adaptable framework, anchored in public institutions while retaining strong multi-stakeholder participation.

6.2. Details of the overall costs and funding approach for the implementation of the IAP.

Action Letter/Number	Action Description	Cost of Action	Funding Source
1A	Drafting a detailed review of procedures and procurement policies that already exist in order to identify gaps and opportunities for inserting gender-responsive measures.	9.500,00 Euros	Municipal budgets, ZDC Government, Donor support/funds, ZDC municipalities
1B	Preparing a suggestion for new procurement guidelines which would include a “must” factor for the inclusion of gender equality criteria in public procurement processes.	7.500,00 Euros	Cantonal Ministry funds, Public sector contributions, donor funds

1C	Working on making local procurement policies in coherence with national and international frameworks on gender equality focusing on good EU practices	7.200,00 Euros	Academic institutions, donor funds, Regional development support, local governments
2A	Development of trainings on gender-responsive procurement for public procurement officials and interested parties such as SME and NGO representatives	12.000,00 Euros	Municipal support, Government budgets, Local Government support, donors, EU project funds
2B	Initiative to start a certification program for public procurement officers which should include training on gender equality.	14.500,00 Euros	Universities, Business Support Organizations, Donors (EU funds from projects), Local governments
2C	Organisation and realisation of workshops and seminars to raise awareness about the importance of gender-responsive procurement.	14.000,00 Euros	Local government support, SME support programs, Government partnerships, donor funds
3A	Plan to secure digital space for dialogue and collaboration on gender-responsive procurement.	5.200,00 Euros	Local Ministries, Donors, Local community programs, Civil society initiatives, Municipal ICT departments
3B	Establish cooperation with women-led organizations to better understand the challenges they face and include their feedback into procurement policies.	13.500,00 Euros	Local Women's NGOs and SMEs; Chamber of Economy Zenica-Doboj Canton for coordination support, Public sector stakeholders Donor funding (UN Women, EU Gender Equality fund), Government grants, Private foundations supporting women's entrepreneurship
3C	Encourage forming partnerships between the public sector and women-owned and women-managed businesses to enhance	16.400,00 Euros	Public sector (local government/municipal government), Project-specific grants-from gender equality funds

	their confidence in the public procurement procedures.		
4A	Suggest introduction of a type of a data collection system to track progress and outcomes of gender-responsive procurement activities	9.100,00 Euros	Government funding, donor programs, Donor support
4B	Conduct periodical evaluations of realised procedure in order to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement policies and practices and make adjustments if necessary.	9.000,00 Euros	Donor funds, government budgets, Government incentives, Local and regional Chamber of Economy projects
TOTAL		117.900,00 Euros	

6.3. Details of the overall timeline for the implementation of the IAP.

The details of the Actions of the IAP have already been presented in the content above on a quarter basis. It was summarised in the GANTT Chart and is an attachment to the IAP.

Action Number and Description	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<i>Quarter</i>																				
1A - ST 1 - Identifying relevant procedures and policies by collecting and organizing available data on existing procedures and procurement policies from relevant departments	█																			
1A - ST 2 - Analysing procedures and identifying gaps and potential areas for gender-responsive improvement		█	█																	
1A - ST 3 - Drafting a detailed review report			█	█																
1B - ST 1 - Defining gender equality criteria with consultations with experts and taking into consideration other factors					█	█														
1B - ST 2 - Developing a draft of the new guidelines									█	█	█									
1B - ST 3 - Developing the final version of the new guidelines													█	█						
1C - ST 1 - Identify national and international frameworks and comparing the existing local procurement policies	█	█																		
1C - ST 2 - Develop proposed amendments with coordination and consultation with relevant stakeholders		█	█	█																
2A - ST 1 - Develop training modules and resources that focus on integrating gender equity principles into procurement processes, tailored to public procurement officials, SMEs, and NGOs.													█	█						
2A - ST 2 - Organize and deliver training sessions that provide interactive learning, ensuring participants understand and can apply gender-responsive procurement practices.																	█	█		
2B - ST 1 - Design the certification structure and develop a curriculum indicating modules on gender equality and gender-responsive procurement aligned with procurement regulations						█	█	█												
2B - ST 2 - Engage relevant stakeholders to secure support and promotion									█	█	█	█								
2C - ST 1 - Develop workshop and seminar content that highlights the benefits, challenges, and best practices of gender-responsive procurement.									█											
2C - ST 2 - Organize workshops to ensure diverse participation from different stakeholders providing practical tools and resources to support gender equality in procurement.									█	█	█									
3A - ST 1 - Create a dedicated email group for all relevant stakeholders and set up a shared document folder to store and access resources on gender-responsive procurement.													█							
3A - ST 2 - Schedule quarterly online meetings or round tables to discuss updates and address challenges in gender-responsive procurement.														█	█					
3A - ST 3 - Propose assigning a coordinator to manage the email group, send periodic updates, and encourage stakeholders to share resources, success stories, and questions with the group.																	█	█		
3B - ST 1 - Create a communication list of women-led organizations/businesses and NGOs in ZDC and invite them to participate in discussions on procurement challenges.					█								█							
3B - ST 2 - Organize focus groups to gather structured feedback on specific challenges in procurement policies.						█	█						█	█	█					
3B - ST 3 - Review and summarize the feedback, working with relevant stakeholders to identify actionable policy changes that reflect the needs of women-led organizations.													█							
3C - ST 1 - Create a mentorship initiative pairing public procurement officers with representatives from women-owned SMEs, offering practical guidance on navigating public procurement.													█	█	█					
3C - ST 2 - Collaborate with partners to draft guidelines on forming public-private partnerships with women-owned businesses, focusing on inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility.																	█	█		
4A - ST 1 - Collaborate with partners to determine metrics that will track the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement																	█	█		
4A - ST 2 - Work with the IT Department to design a prototype data collection system																			█	█
4B - ST 1 - Defining clear, measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive procurement practices.																			█	
4B - ST 2 - Gathering data on procurement outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and policy impacts, using interviews and system data from the procurement portal																			█	█
4B - ST 3 - Review the findings, identify trends or areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to adjust or refine procurement policies to better support gender-responsive goals.																			█	█

6.4. Details of the overall approach to monitoring the implementation of the IAP and recording performance against specific indicators.

The output indicators against which the progress of actions will be monitored, have already detailed in the Action Tables for each individual action. These output indicators are transferred into the table the IAP implementation framework, below:

Action Number	Output Indicator	Baseline	Target
1A – 1	Compilation of a policy/procedure inventory from all relevant departments.	0	2
1A – 2	A detailed gap analysis identifying at least 2 areas for gender-responsive improvements.	0	3
1A – 3	A comprehensive review report of existing procedures and procurement policies, with gender lens applied	0	2

1B – 1	Defined gender equality criteria for PP in the draft procurement guidelines document	0	3
1B – 2	Suggested final version of procurement guidelines	0	2
1C – 1	A comparative analysis of national, international and EU frameworks against completed local PPs	0	3
1C – 2	A set of proposed amendments to local PPs developed with stakeholder input	0	1
2A – 1	Gender-responsive procurement training modules and resources developed	0	1
2A – 2	At least 2 training sessions delivered to public procurement officials, SMEs, NGOs	0	3
2B – 1	Stakeholder engagement conducted to support and promote the certification program	0	4
2B – 2	Certification and curriculum developed with integrated gender-responsive modules	0	8
2C – 1	Workshop and seminar content developed on gender-responsive procurement	0	2
2C – 2	Workshops organized with diverse stakeholder participation, including SMEs and NGOs	0	8
3A – 1	At least 3 online meetings/roundtables conducted for collaboration and information exchange	0	9
3A – 1	Digital communication platform established	0	1
3B – 1	Number of women-led organizations engaged in consultations	0	5
3B – 2	Number of focus groups organized	0	10
3B – 3	Number of policy recommendations submitted based on consultations	0	1
3C – 1	Number of targeted women-led organizations engaged in consultations	0	8
3C – 2	Number of focus groups conducted	0	5
3C – 3	Number of drafted policy recommendations based on stakeholder feedback	0	1
4A – 1	Prototype of the data collection system designed and integrated	0	1
4A – 2	Training conducted for procurement officials on the new system	0	3
4B – 1	Comprehensive evaluation conducted using qualitative and quantitative data	0	2
4B – 2	Report with recommendations for policy or procedural improvements completed	0	1

To ensure transparency, accountability, and a broader understanding of the outcomes achieved through the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), Zenica-Doboj Canton will be open to a dual approach to showcasing wider impact. Which one will be used will depend on the current implementation level and availability of personnel for follow-up activities. Those are:

1. Annual Progress Reporting:

The Department for Development and International Projects (DDIP), as the coordinating body of the IAP, will lead the preparation of an Annual Progress Report, which will be aligned with the existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the Development Strategy of Zenica-Doboj Canton. The Annual Report will be publicly available and presented during multi-stakeholder meetings to promote inclusive dialogue and shared ownership of the IAP outcomes. This report will serve multiple purposes:

- Track progress against planned output indicators and milestones.
- Reflect stakeholder contributions and local success stories.
- Document key challenges, lessons learned, and adjustments made to implementation.
- Serve as a communication tool for citizens, public institutions, and international partners.

2. Independent Evaluation

In the final phase of implementation (2029), an Independent Evaluation will be commissioned to assess the overall impact and effectiveness of the IAP. This evaluation will:

- Measure progress against strategic objectives and expected results.
- Evaluate the extent to which gender-responsive procurement practices have been institutionalized.
- Identify long-term benefits, such as changes in policy, practice, stakeholder collaboration, and economic empowerment of women.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for future planning and scale-up.

The findings of the Independent Evaluation could be shared with policymakers, municipalities, civil society, and relevant national and international stakeholders. They will also inform the next development planning cycle of the Zenica-Doboj Canton (2028–2034), ensuring the sustainability and integration of gender-responsive public procurement beyond the lifespan of the GenProcure project.

6.5. Details of overall approach to risk management.

The risks associated with each of the actions, the probability of them happening, the likely impact of them, and ways of mitigating them have already been elaborated in detail but, they are summarised below:

Action Number	Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
1A – 1	Limited access to or poor documentation of existing procurement procedures	Medium	High	Early coordination with departments to secure access Usage of formal requests and leadership support to ensure cooperation
1A – 2	Lack of gender expertise among staff involved in analysis	Medium	High	Engagement of gender experts or NGOs from the beginning

				Providing a short training on gender-responsive procurement
1A – 3	Final recommendations not being used in policy reform or planning	Medium/High	High	Involve key decision-makers in earlier stages Present findings in a simple format with clear follow-up steps Link results to ongoing policy initiatives
1B – 1	Resistance from procurement bodies or ministries toward including mandatory gender criteria	Medium	High	Early engagement and sensitization workshops; emphasize legal and policy alignment
1B – 2	Insufficient gender expertise in defining criteria	Medium	High	Hire experienced consultants; involve NGOs with proven track records
1C – 1	Lack of alignment between local and national legal frameworks	Medium	High	Involve legal experts in the beginning phases and align recommendations with both local needs and legal feasibility
1C – 2	Lack of capacity at municipal level to interpret and implement suggested changes	Medium	High	Include capacity-building elements in the final proposal; partner with academic institutions
2A – 1	Limited participation from SMEs or public officials due to time/resource constraints	Medium	Medium	Schedule flexibly; offer hybrid/online options; partner with Chambers to incentivize SMEs
2A – 2	Lack of long-term impact or application of training in real procurement scenarios	Medium	Medium	Conduct follow-up support or refresher workshops; offer post-training mentoring
2B – 1	Difficulty integrating gender content into formal certification standards	Medium	Medium	Involve gender experts and legal advisors in curriculum design; compare with international models
2B – 2	Limited participation in pilot certification phase	Low–Medium	Medium	Offering pilot incentives (e.g. recognition, visibility) Involve public procurement authorities
2B – 3	Lack of institutional interest in adopting certification for procurement officers	Medium	High	Secure early-on support through co-design process;

				Alignment with public HR and professional development policies
2C – 1	Difficulty translating abstract gender concepts into actionable insights	Medium	Medium	Use practical examples and tools in content Employ experienced facilitators
2C – 2	Low participation from SMEs or civil society actors due to lack of interest or time	Medium	High	Promote early Partner with Chambers and NGOs for outreach Offer flexible formats
3A – 1	Technical difficulties in accessing or maintaining the digital tools	Low-Medium	Medium	Use widely available, user-friendly platforms (Google Drive, mailing lists); provide basic support
3A – 1	Lack of commitment to maintaining communication over time	Medium	Medium	Assign a proactive coordinator; set clear expectations on update frequency
3B – 1	Low participation from women-led organizations	Medium	High	Outreach via NGOs and Chamber of Economy; provide incentives such as visibility/promotion
3B – 2	Limited availability of funding to run focus groups	High	Medium	Early fundraising, seek co-financing or in-kind support combined sessions with trainings
3B – 3	Resistance to policy changes from existing procurement bodies	Medium	High	Involve stakeholders early in the process, present evidence-based recommendations
3C – 1	Insufficient funding for key engagement activities	High	Medium	Initiate early fundraising activities and pursue complementary grants.
3C – 2	Resistance to policy changes by established procurement bodies	Medium	High	Engage key stakeholders early in the process and ensure continuous dialogue.
4A – 1	Resistance or slow adoption by procurement officials	Medium	Medium	Provide hands-on, practical training; designate local "champions" to support peer on-boarding
4B – 1	Lack of access to relevant procurement data	Medium	High	Engage IT and procurement units early; secure necessary access permissions

4B – 2	Low stakeholder participation in interviews and consultations	Medium	Medium	Schedule interviews with flexibility; leverage trusted partners to encourage participation
4B – 3	Disagreement on indicators or evaluation methodology	Medium	Medium	Facilitate inclusive, expert-led workshops for consensus building
4B – 4	Findings are not used to improve future procurement practices	Medium	High	Present findings in actionable formats; host policy dialogue sessions with decision-makers