

**Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to
UN System Coordination on Gender
Equality and the Empowerment of Women
in Europe and Central Asia (ECA)**

Final Report



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A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

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Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DaO	Delivering as One
DoA	Delegation of Authority
DRF	Development Results Framework
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EVAW	Ending violence against women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEEW	Gender equality and empowerment of women
GTG	Gender Theme Group
IANWGE	Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IB	Institutional budget
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MCO	Multi-country office
NWM	National women's machineries
OEEF	Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
PAG	Program Advisory Group

Acronyms

PSG	Peer Support Group
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCM	Regional Coordinating Mechanism
RO	Regional Office
SN	Strategic Note
SPR	Strategic Planning Retreat
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDC	UN Development Coordinator
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN-RWGG	ECA Regional Working Group on Gender
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Foreword

Written by UN Women

Executive Summary

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

This evaluation, commissioned by the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Regional Office of UN Women assesses the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate on gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) and its contributions in different operational contexts within the region and over the time period of 2011 through the first quarter of 2015. It is intended to inform UN Women's mid-term reviews of country/regional strategic notes and its Strategic Plan 2014-2017. This regional evaluation builds on and contributes to a UN Women corporate-level evaluation, on the same topic and with similar purpose and objectives.

Given the early stage of evolution of the ECA Regional Office (established in 2014, it is UN Women's newest Regional Office), the evaluation was formative in nature. It took stock of what has been done and what has been learned from these first years of experience, and provides ideas for how the Regional Office can take forward the UN system coordination mandate. The evaluation was conducted for 13 countries with a UN Women presence¹ and, to a limited extent, for five countries where UN Women is non-resident,² and considered both country and regional level contributions of UN Women.

The evaluation applied a gender equality and human rights responsive approach, and was guided by the principles of empowerment and fair power relations. Systems thinking and feminist theory were used to understand how UN Women's influence on the UN system is enabled or limited.

METHODS

The evaluation process, from inception to report submission, took place from May 2015 to July 2016. A multi-method approach was adopted that triangulated information from:

- Interviews with consulted stakeholders (210 in-country and 16 at regional level)
- Document and secondary data review
- A portfolio review of the 13 countries
- Three on-line surveys of: UN Women staff at country level, GTGs and other working groups at country level, and regional stakeholders
- Four country case studies³ based on field visits and comprehensive in-depth interviews .
- Virtual consultations with stakeholders in three countries.⁴

Data analysis involved comparative analysis: a) across countries and in relation to normative or intergovernmental and operational work; b) of UN Women's experience in implementing its UN system coordination mandate in Country Offices with Delegation of Authority and those with programme presence only; and c) where relevant, countries using a Delivering as One framework

¹ Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, Serbia, FYR Macedonia, Turkey (Ankara), Ukraine.

² Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro, and Turkmenistan (Turkmenistan was a non-presence country for UN Women until 2015 as it progressively hired staff under the authority of the Multi-Country Office in Kazakhstan)

³ Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, and Turkey.

⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Serbia.

against those that are not. Comparative analysis helped to identify good practices in coordination, innovative approaches, and lessons learned.

Other data analysis techniques included: descriptive analysis of different contexts; content analysis of the substantial qualitative data collected; quantitative and statistical analysis of survey results; and descriptive statistics in aggregating a common set of characteristics in the portfolio review.

CONTEXT

ECA region. The ECA region is large and diverse. There are three somewhat distinct sub-regions (the Central Asian countries, the South Caucasus and Western Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Western Balkans and Turkey). While all countries in the ECA region are considered middle income countries (MIC), economic growth has remained slow for most of them and economic inequality is on the rise. Instability is prevalent in most countries, due to conflicts resulting from water scarcity, community and ethnic tensions, and border disputes as a result of the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced in areas along the Turkey, Syria and Iraq borders. Many countries are undergoing a transition to democracy and the goal of integration into the European Union is driving the policy and reform priorities of some countries. Five countries have started or are waiting to start the EU accession process.

Overall, women in the ECA region are less represented than men in the labour market and as political and economic decision makers. Domestic violence is a persistent problem for women and girls. While a number of countries have signed and ratified important UN conventions on eliminating barriers to gender equality, significant gaps remain in their implementation.

UN system context. In the UN system, the reforms of the last decade have culminated in the Delivering as One (DaO) approach with its accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) – efforts intended to achieve stronger institutional coherence across all UN agencies. Reforms also led to the creation of a regional layer of management (the UN Development Group regional teams) in 2008, which provide a foundation for UN Women to implement its GEEW coordination mandate at both regional and country levels. However, the DaO implementation process has been stymied by persistent fragmentation of the UN system and horizontal accountability (i.e., across UN agencies) on GEEW and in other areas remains weak.

UN system coordination in ECA. The UN has two important regional coordination mechanisms in the ECA region to ensure coherence – the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) led by the UN Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE) and the Regional UNDG, under which UN Women, along with other UN agencies, participates in the ECA Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) and the proposed Program Advisory Group (PAG). In 2015, the ECA Regional Working Group on Gender (UN-RWGG) was established under the RCM and the R-UNDG to ensure a coordinated UN system approach to promoting GEEW in the region. Challenges in the regional architecture persist, partly due to the complexity of institutional arrangements, making it sometimes difficult for UN Women to promote coherence on GEEW.

UN Women in ECA. UN Women was established in 2010 by GA resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence to assist Member States and the United Nations system to progress more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving GEEW. UN Women's composite mandate includes three roles: a normative role to support inter-governmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women, an operational role to help Member States implement international standards, and a coordination role to promote the UN system's accountability on GEEW. The UN coordination role, which is the newest of the three, consists of leading, promoting accountability, and coordinating (system-wide and inter-agency), which includes gender mainstreaming support.

UN Women has been present in the ECA region since 2011. The roll out of the UN Women Regional Architecture was completed in 2014 with the merger of the two former UNIFEM sub-regional offices in Kazakhstan and Slovakia into a Regional Office in Turkey. It took over a year to fill 15 of the 18 positions and the Regional Office only became operational in 2015. Many changes also took place during a transition period at country level through 2014.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance of UN Women Coordination Work on GEEW

Relevance at country level

UN Women offices in the ECA region have taken a context-specific and multi-stakeholder approach to implementation of the UN system coordination mandate. This is partly explained by the lack of specific guidance from HQ, leaving each office to carry out its coordination role according to its own understanding, priorities, and resources available. UN Women offices in the region have applied the mandate broadly to include actors within the UN system and in the country, depending on what relationships they have prioritized to achieve results most efficiently and effectively. External actors expect UN Women to play a convening role, and donors and international partners in a few countries expressed a desire for UN Women to play an even stronger coordination role to achieve greater coherence (Kyrgyzstan and Turkey) or to mitigate competition for donor funds (in BiH). Overall, the approaches that UN Women offices have taken, regardless of presence type, have been relevant to stakeholders outside the UN system and realistic in light of the need to prioritize their resources.

UN Women's strategic positioning for UN system coordination has been affected by its ability to navigate the terrain in countries where other UN entities have had a firmly established role in leading on GEEW and/or in specific thematic areas such as EAW or Women's Economic Empowerment, and where there is competition for resources among UN entities. UN Women has been able to play its coordination role more effectively by adopting approaches that are grounded in an understanding of the comparative strengths and niches of other actors, weighed against its own organizational assets and capacities. Other UN entities also judge UN Women's credibility to some extent by its level of authority, the resources it brings, and the support of the Resident Coordinator. Contextual factors such as EU accession and changes in donor priorities also affect UN Women's strategic positioning.

Interviews show that UN Women's UN system coordination mandate is not well understood by other entities in the UN. This has resulted in some unrealistic expectations about UN Women's coordination role and its support for gender mainstreaming in the UN system, which often derive from the limited GEEW capacity of other UN entities. UN agencies are not living up to their own shared accountability for GEEW commitments, which is demonstrated in the low capacity, seniority, or expertise of many Gender Focal Points in Gender Thematic Groups (GTGs).

Relevance at regional level

The UN Women ECA Regional Office is well positioned at the regional level and has been a convenor/co-convenor of several initiatives to improve coordination with other UN regional entities. Nevertheless, there is a shared recognition that regional coordination should be strengthened and that UN Women has a key role to play. Now that the UN Women Regional Office is fully operational, it can begin to put more emphasis on strategic and issue-based coordination. The strategic positioning of the ECA RO vis-à-vis its technical support role to countries on UN coordination has been weakened by a context of limited human and financial resources.

Effectiveness

UN Women's UN system coordination efforts to date have contributed to progress towards GEEW at country level in the ECA region, but there is insufficient evidence to make consistent links between its coordination work and substantial changes for gender equality on the ground.

There is clear evidence from both country offices and programme presence offices that UN Women has coordinated joint work in promoting normative frameworks on GEEW. Some joint efforts to influence policy and joint advocacy initiatives have led to states adopting legislative or institutional measures to enact GEEW recommendations. The submission of reports on CEDAW, through the UNCT and with the support of the GTG, is a common joint action across all presence models. UN Women's leadership in joint advocacy efforts and campaigns, often within the framework of the GTG, is recognized in all countries.

In terms of UN Women's value added to operational activities of the UN, limitations in the implementation of joint programmes have been noted. UN entities participating in joint programmes in the ECA region have not demonstrated a strong sense of partnership or joint vision throughout implementation; even under the most favourable conditions, institutional power dynamics determine the degree of partnership. Joint programmes are a common coordinating mechanism in both UN Women country offices and programme presence countries, but other UN agencies have a tendency to implement in parallel and separately. Even under a DaO approach which facilitates the coordination of GEEW across agencies, as UN Women Albania's experience has shown, the effectiveness of its coordination efforts are best served when there is no competition for funds, when the individuals engaged have a relationship of trust, and when the partnership between UN Women and implementing UN entities is based on equal power relations.

Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) and the more recent Results Groups on Gender are common, critical mechanisms for building coherence within the UNCT around GEEW. Whether UN Women has a presence or not, all countries have a GTG or equivalent, and 10 have extended GTGs that include stakeholders beyond the UN system. While GTGs have been effective in building coherence, in general they face challenges in fulfilling their intended role and capacity issues have been noted. The UN Women ECA Regional Office has taken steps to address these, such as the training for GTGs and UNCTs in gender mainstreaming (and the future role of the RWGG in this type of support), and the Training of Trainers in 2015 under the aegis of the Regional Strategic Partnership Framework, which includes building a roster of Gender Experts.

UN Women offices in the region have made significant contributions to building UNCT capacity to mainstream gender in the preparation of the UNDAFs in the region. Six countries in the region have a gender-specific outcome in their UNDAFs, and five DaO countries (Albania, BiH Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Montenegro) have strengthened gender-sensitive outputs and indicators in their results frameworks. The UN Women ECA RO desk review of 12 UNDAFs (for the 2016-2020 period) noted that while significant efforts had been made to integrate gender across UNDAFs, there were still some gaps in systematically promoting GEEW in these planning frameworks. The challenge is to ensure that those GEEW results in planning documents are resourced, implemented, and monitored.

With regard to the UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (the "Gender Scorecard"), the UN's principal accountability mechanism for reporting on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming by UNCTs, six countries in the ECA region conducted Gender Scorecard exercises during the period reviewed. The results contributed to improving gender mainstreaming in UNDAF planning frameworks but their effects on internal policies and programming by UN entities remains to be seen.

Factors affecting interagency coordination on GEEW

Among the external factors affecting inter-agency coordination on GEEW are the EU accession requirements (relevant to five countries in the region) which have been especially favorable to UN Women's efforts around joint normative work.

Although donors and state actors view joint programming favorably, the funding environment for this middle-income region has been declining. This trend has intensified competition for scarce resources among UN agencies, with a counteractive effect on inter-agency coordination. Other factors adversely affecting inter-agency coordination include donors' unfilled potential to support UN Women's coordination role more explicitly, prevailing conservative attitudes on gender equality in the region, and the lack of sex-disaggregated data at national level.

Internal factors (within the UN system) affecting UN Women's effectiveness in implementing its coordination mandate and, more generally, the culture of collaboration between UN entities, include the backing of the UN Resident Coordinator in creating a space for UN Women in the UNCT, how receptive Heads of Agencies are to UN Women's coordination mandate, the availability of funding for joint work, and the effectiveness of GEEW inter-agency coordination mechanisms and their members' GEEW capacities. In the DaO countries, there is a stronger enabling environment for collaboration.

Integration of Gender Equality and Human-Rights Based Approaches

UN Women's key normative frameworks (e.g., CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, ICPD, UPR) are guided by a rights-based approach. More broadly, human rights are strongly integrated into EU accession criteria and in general support the work of the UN in advocating for human rights issues emerging in the region. Human rights principles have also been promoted in UN programming frameworks, though the extent to which they are integrated in the UNDAFs is variable. Through the GTGs, UN Women has facilitated the submission of confidential reports to the CEDAW Committee on the part of UNCTs in eight out of 13 countries. UN Women's collaborative work within the UNCT has also supported national governments in implementing normative frameworks.

UN Women has been successful in using a multi-stakeholder approach to allow diverse civil society actors to provide input into consultations for both global initiatives (such as Beijing+20 reviews) and national policy areas, including the development of national action plans. UN Women's relationship with the women's movement holds potential for greater linkages and engagement between civil society networks and the UN system. Extended GTGs offer the possibility for regular multi-stakeholder dialogue and the inclusion of civil society perspectives could shift the power dynamics within and outside the UN system towards addressing more systemic barriers to GEEW and hold different actors accountable to their GEEW commitments. However, it is recognized that this can be challenging in certain political contexts where the democratic space for civil society is shrinking.

In reviewing how these gender equality principles are being applied in the UN, the evaluation notes gaps between the intentions of UN agencies and their capacity to implement GEEW commitments on the one hand, and between their intentions and their political will or commitment to gender equality on the other. Underlying causes of gender inequality are increasingly addressed in the CCAs, but greater links can be made between these analyses, the UNDAF, and the subsequent operational work of the UN.

Organizational Efficiency

Limited human and financial resources constrain UN Women's work on UN system coordination in the ECA region at both country and regional levels. With the exception of Turkey, the countries

included in the portfolio analysis did not have a UN Women staff member dedicated to UN system coordination functions. Staff levels and capacities vary considerably across the different types of country offices, and in programme presence countries in particular, the number and seniority of UN Women staff has the potential to limit the Entity's influence and credibility in inter-agency fora. UN Women staff members also reported insufficient time to dedicate to UN system coordination tasks given the demands of fulfilling multiple roles. While UN Women offices in the region are expected to carry out the Entity's composite mandate, including UN system coordination, staff members receive limited guidance from HQ about which aspects of the mandate to prioritize. Planning and Coordination Specialists at the regional level are likewise challenged by a lack of support and practical guidance and tools to help advise countries on coordination-related matters. UN Women has been able to partially mitigate the effects of resource limitations on coordination efforts due to the personal strengths of individuals, including 'soft skills' that allow them to convene actors and build strong relationships despite challenging contexts.

The lengthy process of establishing the regional architecture had implications for UN Women's capacity to strategically implement its UN system coordination mandate at both regional and country levels. The focus on structure and putting procedures in place meant that less time was available for strategic planning and decision-making. Efficiency during the transition was lacking, and country level staff noted problems ranging from duplicative reporting to insufficient individualized support. The Regional Office was likewise challenged, primarily due to a shortage of staff and increased responsibilities to follow up with offices transitioning to Delegation of Authority.

In general, UN Women does not prioritize its UN system coordination mandate in its country programming plans, and reporting on/measuring the effects of coordination is inconsistent across countries. There is limited reference to UN system coordination results in Strategic Notes and DRFs, which limits the explicit link between UN coordination and substantive results on GEEW. Reasons for the implicit prioritization of programming over coordination-related issues vary, but there is an expectation from HQ that offices will mobilize resources (usually linked to programming) and pressure to improve programme delivery rates. Both of these demands run counter to the spirit of UN system coordination: the need to expend or disburse resources quickly precludes coordination, which is by nature time intensive, and the pressure to mobilize resources leads to greater competition for resources among UN entities.

The UN Women Regional Office in ECA serves as a bridge between HQ and UN Women offices in the region. Stakeholders consulted indicated that the RO has not yet been able to provide sufficient support to offices with respect to the UN system coordination mandate. However, with the RO's current capacity, staff members indicate that there is little more they can do to provide tailored guidance and that additional assistance from HQ is needed. The level of resourcing for the regional architecture has not been sufficient given the multiple demands the RO must meet. Thus, from the country perspective, there is currently a lack of useful guidance and practical tools and limited capacity to address the issue, as well as a lack of clarity with regard to where the responsibility for addressing the issue lies (HQ or RO). In general, the UN Women RO has played a critical role in establishing gender coordination mechanisms and strengthening the overall UNDG programming coordination in the region. Now it must meet the expectations of regional teams with regard to coordination on substantive issues at the regional level and sharing of good practices, among others things.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the evaluation concludes that UN Women has made an important difference in the GEEW landscape in the UN system in the ECA region, despite operating with a number of limitations in its

first five years and considering the stage of evolution of the UN Women Regional Office. While there are ways in which UN Women in the ECA region can improve its strategy, approach, and resourcing of UN coordination (identified in the recommendations), much of its success will also require support from HQ and will hinge on the culture, practices and behaviors of other actors of the UN system, including UN entities and Member States.

Recommendations for UN Women HQ

The following recommendations to UN Women Headquarters, UN Women Regional Office, Country Offices, and Programme Presence offices in the ECA region are based on the evaluation framework, the analysis that informed findings and conclusions, and discussions held with UN Women offices, Country Reference Groups, and UN Women Regional Office stakeholders. The recommendations try to take into account the roles and responsibilities of HQ and the ECA Regional Office, and of the different types of presence that UN Women has in the region.⁵ They also consider the overall challenges for coordination in the UN system and recognize that demands on UN Women resources at the regional and country level are ever growing.

Recommendation 1: UN Women should provide operational guidance for UN Women staff on how to plan, implement and report on the Entity's UN system coordination mandate in different geographic and thematic contexts.

This entails developing clear statements of organizational priorities and expectations of UN system coordination on GEEW for UN Women offices at both regional and country level; developing clear guidelines on communicating to other UN agencies about the nature of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate; providing direction on how UN Women offices should plan and report on their efforts to deliver coordinated results on GEEW; developing an easily accessible repository of GEEW coordination resources; and strengthening the feedback loop between the field and HQ on evolving guidance needs.

Recommendation 2: UN Women should align the scope of the mandate to its resource base.

Recognizing the limited funding base and that the Institutional Budget for UN Women may not be increased, resourcing the coordination role will necessitate either: a) re-allocating or re-aligning existing core and IB resources; b) better integrating financing for the coordination function in the Entity's resource mobilization strategy; or c) reducing the scope of the mandate to align with current resource levels. This will require clearly communicating to Member States/Board of Directors the implications of underfunding. If it is decided that UN Women's current scope should be maintained, then the resources to support that mandate in the field will need to be found or re-allocated.

Recommendations for the UN Women ECA Regional Office

Recommendation 3: The UN Women ECA RO should continue to strengthen the strategic aspects of its UN system coordination at the regional level.

The ECA RO is positioned to play a more strategic role at the regional level given its leadership and co-leadership of several coordinating mechanisms. The Regional Director and her team should build on this foundation by: playing a proactive role in engaging and facilitating discussions on

⁵ There are no recommendations targeted at the MCO in Kazakhstan as it was the subject of a Multi-Country Portfolio Evaluation in 2015 that considered the UN system coordination mandate. The evaluation team endorses the first recommendation of that evaluation which was that UN Women give priority to the UN system coordination mandate to maximize the organization's effectiveness.

strategic issues and filling gaps in GEEW knowledge in the region; encouraging joint communications, advocacy, etc. at the regional level to raise awareness of different issues; continuing to facilitate joint efforts to collect data on processes at the country level that can be used for decision making by regional inter-agency mechanisms and to better orient technical support to countries; continuing high-level dialogue with key partner agencies in GEEW to enhance collective efforts and reduce duplication; making contributions to the 2030 agenda, for example by devising a plan for coordination on GEEW in context of the SDGs to be shared with stakeholders; and continuing outreach to donors.

Recommendation 4: The UN Women ECA RO should enhance its support to countries on UN system coordination

As noted in Recommendation 1, there is a need for additional and different kinds of guidance and technical support for UN Women offices in the field. The ability to provide such guidance and support is constrained by resources available to the Regional Office and/or by the nature of the guidance (e.g., some of it would need to be issued by HQ and/or the UNDG). The RO should enhance its country support role, as feasible given the current constraints. It may want to consider continuing efforts to document and share promising practices in UN system coordination, including from the GTGs and Results Groups on Gender in the region; assisting UN Women offices with resource mobilization in support of the coordination function in the field by building it into funding proposals; encouraging the development of pooled funding mechanisms at regional or country level to facilitate joint work on GEEW and support the UN system as a whole; and encouraging more strategic use of joint programmes on gender equality at the country level, which can be used for coordination.

Recommendations for UN Women at Country Level

Recommendation 5: UN Women COs in ECA should articulate an overall strategy and approach to GEEW coordination, including a clear strategy to influence and lead the UNCT on GEEW, coordinate the GTG, and enhance capacity of UN agencies to mainstream GE.

At the country level, there is a need to align demands for UN Women's support for UN system coordination and gender mainstreaming with the capacities of Country Offices. This will require reflection on how to ensure that coordination work is highly strategic and helps support the CO's overall strategy. COs should articulate an overall strategy and approach to UN system coordination in the CO Strategic Note, while emphasizing how this coordination role can augment results in the identified impact areas. Resources to support this work should also be identified. In addition, COs should continue to strengthen the GTG or Results Groups on Gender; continue to enhance contribution to monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF and pay particular attention to CCAs; clarify an approach to gender mainstreaming; review current roles and responsibilities among existing staff and consider ways of including coordination roles and functions in their efforts to mobilize non-core resources.

Recommendation 6: UN Women programme presence offices in ECA should articulate strategic priorities for GEEW coordination within their overall mandate based on an assessment of the institutional environment, their own resource base, the donor environment, and the needs and opportunities within the country context.

The role of programme presence countries should be determined by HQ (as per Recommendation 1). This may require UN Women programme presence offices to assess what is feasible and strategic in their particular situation as the basis for setting priorities for their coordination work. Such assessments should seek to capture: the institutional environment of the UN system; available human and financial resources; the GEEW needs of the country; and the donor environment, among

other things. The office should also rationalize the proportional attention it may give to coordination, normative and operational work. Programme Presence offices should then establish clear and strategic priorities for UN system coordination and outline how these will support UN Women's overall strategy in the country; make use of the GTG or Results Group on Gender for coordination and adopt a leadership role in specific areas agreed with the UNCT; seek the support of the Resident Coordinator to engage the UNCT and ensure that GEEW activities also exist within the UNCT work plan; build coordination resources into mobilization of non-core resources to support programming priorities; and continue to clarify UN Women's UN system coordination mandate for other UN system actors in the country.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the Regional Evaluation of UN Women's contribution to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) in Europe and Central Asia (ECA). The evaluation was commissioned by the ECA Regional Office and conducted by an external independent evaluation team between May 2015 and March 2016. It was managed by the Regional Evaluation Specialist with active involvement of internal and external reference groups.

The evaluation builds on and contributes to a UN Women corporate-level evaluation, on the same topic and with similar purpose and objectives, which will be finalized by April 2016. The regional evaluation was planned in the ECA Regional Office Strategic Note approved in January 2015 in order to complement the corporate evaluation. The two evaluations were able to draw on synergies in terms of methodological design, tool development, and data collection, and formulation of findings and recommendations.

The report is presented in five chapters: background, context, findings, promising practices and lessons, and conclusions and recommendations. Appendices are presented in Volume II.

1.2 Purpose, Objectives, Scope and Use of the Evaluation

Purpose

This strategic evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate on GEEW and its contributions in different operational contexts within the ECA region. Given the early stage of evolution of the ECA Regional Office (established in 2014, it is UN Women's newest Regional Office), the evaluation was formative in nature. It took stock of what has been done and what has been learned from these first years of experience, and provides ideas for how the Regional Office can take forward the UN system coordination mandate.

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. Assess the **relevance** of UN Women's contribution to the United Nations system coordination on GEEW at regional and national levels in the ECA region.
2. Assess the **effectiveness and organizational efficiency** in progressing towards the achievement of UN Women results through its UN coordination mandate on GEEW, as defined in the 2011-2013 and 2014-2017 strategic plans, including the organizational mechanisms to ensure efficient linkages/feedback loop between UN Women headquarters (HQ), the ECA Regional Office, and the field offices.
3. Analyse how **human rights approach and gender equality principles** are integrated in the UN Women coordination mandate.
4. **Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples and innovations** of work supported by UN Women in UN coordination on GEEW in ECA at regional and national levels.

Scope

The evaluation analysed UN Women's coordination work in the ECA Region from 2011 through the first quarter of 2015.⁶ The evaluation considered the range of approaches to system-wide and interagency coordination in the 13 countries⁷ in the ECA region where UN Women has a Country Office with full delegation of authority (DoA) or a programme or project presence.⁸ This includes the multi-country office (MCO) in Kazakhstan. The types of UN Women presence are described in Section 2.5.

The evaluation included some data relating to the five countries where UN Women is a non-resident agency (see section 1.3 data collection).

At the regional level, the evaluation considered the role of the Regional Office (RO) in providing technical support, guidance and oversight to UN Women Country Offices in their UN system coordination role in GEEW and the role/contributions of the RO in regional coordinating bodies such as the Regional United Nations Development Group (R-UNDG) and the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for Europe and Central Asia.

Intended use

The regional evaluation is expected to inform UN Women's mid-term reviews of country/regional strategic notes and its Strategic Plan 2014-2017, and to provide insights on UN Women's role in promoting and mainstreaming gender equality in the context of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The evaluation incorporated strategies to share initial findings and the final evaluation report with a broad set of stakeholders including reference groups and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in case study countries.

1.3 Evaluation Methods

The regional evaluation was based on the main evaluation criteria in the terms of reference (see Volume II, Appendix I) and an Evaluation Matrix (see Volume II, Appendix II) that outlined the evaluation questions, illustrative sub-questions and indicators, methods, and sources.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation adopted a Gender Equality and Human Rights Responsive Evaluation approach, which means that:

- The evaluation was grounded in the human rights frameworks for UN Women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is known as the "international bill of women's rights", and the Beijing Platform for Action, which sets forth governments' commitments to enhance women's

⁶ In practice, we considered as much of 2015 as possible in order to reflect more recent developments in country contexts and at regional level.

⁷ Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, Serbia, FYR Macedonia, Turkey (Ankara), Ukraine.

⁸ In the documentation for ECA RO over the period under review, some countries are referred to as "programme presence" and others as "project presence" and this has changed over time. In this report, we refer only to "programme presence" as an umbrella term, which is also used in the ECA RO Strategic Note Narrative 2014-2017, p.7.

rights. The spirit of these agreements has been affirmed by other normative agreements (see sidebar).

- The evaluation adopted the principles of empowerment and fair power relations, inclusiveness, transparency and

accountability, and participation and reflection. In each country visited for the case studies, the evaluation team:

- Solicited perspectives of civil society organizations and government officials to understand the external point of view about the work of the UN and the role of UN Women in coordinating the UN on GEEW issues
- Engaged in participatory exercises with UN Women staff at the beginning and end of the mission; engaged country reference groups at the beginning (to gather feedback on the proposed process) and at the end of the mission to validate early observations;⁹ and, where possible, shared observations and engaged in discussions with UN Country Teams (UNCT).

Other normative agreements guiding the work of UN Women

Sustainable Development Goals (and previously the MDGs)
 UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and sexual violence in conflict (resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013)
 Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 and resolution 2011/5
 UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination policy on gender equality and women’s empowerment and its corresponding system-wide action plan

The regional evaluation also drew from two key and inter-related approaches: systems thinking and feminist theory. Systems approaches and feminist theory together form a synergistic and overlapping critical base for this evaluation. Both are centred on the key questions: where does power lie and how is it exercised?

A systems approach has three interrelated aspects:¹¹

- Understanding the relationships in the system -what are the elements of the system, how do they interact, and where is power seen to lie?
- Understanding the boundaries in the system – what are the organizational boundaries and existing mechanisms including for coordination, who is in or out, whose perspectives are valued?
- Engaging with multiple-perspectives within the system (Who are the stakeholders, and what are their perceptions of different actors within the system? How do different understandings affect the way stakeholders act?)

A system...

“A system is a set of entities that are seen by someone, as interacting together, to do (achieve) something.”¹⁰

In the context of this evaluation, the notion of system applies to different units of analysis, for example: the UN system as a whole (globally), the UN at regional or country level, and UN Women itself.

As such, the evaluation sought to understand how certain dimensions of the UN system (i.e. structures, boundaries, relationships, norms, values, culture, etc.) enable or limit the promotion of GEEW and progress towards equality. In addition, the evaluation explicitly considered the extent to

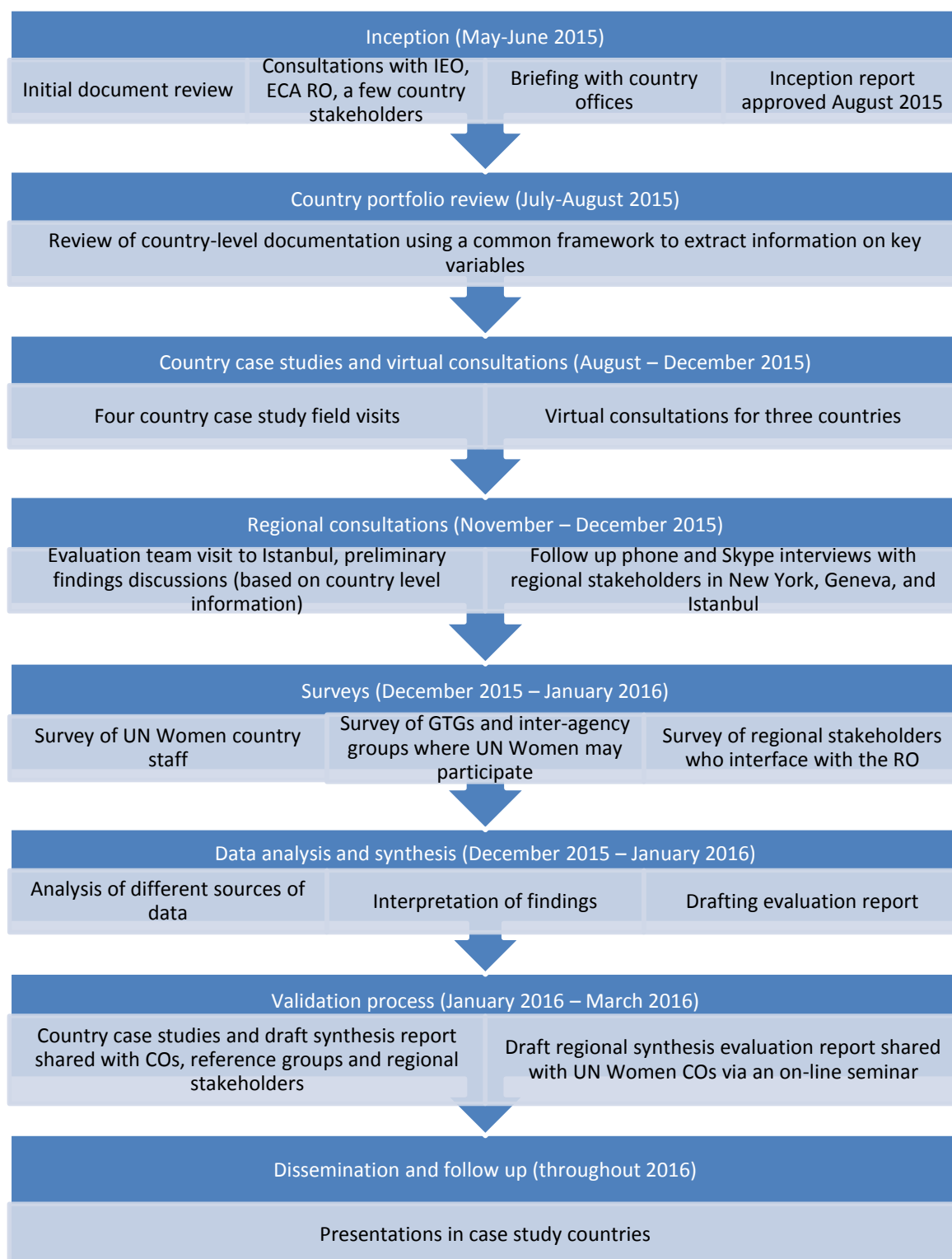
⁹ Albania excepted – due to scheduling changes and availabilities, the team did not meet with the reference group at the end of the mission. Turkey did not have a country reference group.

¹⁰ Morris, R.M. "Thinking about systems for sustainable lifestyles." *Open University Systems Society (OUSys) Newsletter* 39 (Autumn 2005): 15-19.

¹¹ For more detail, please see the inception report.

which UN Women has used its coordination mandate to influence the UN system, or at least the key actors of the UN within the ECA region, to challenge these dimensions in the work of the UN (e.g. by furthering analysis of the underlying causes of gender inequality).

Evaluation process



Ethics, gender equality and human rights

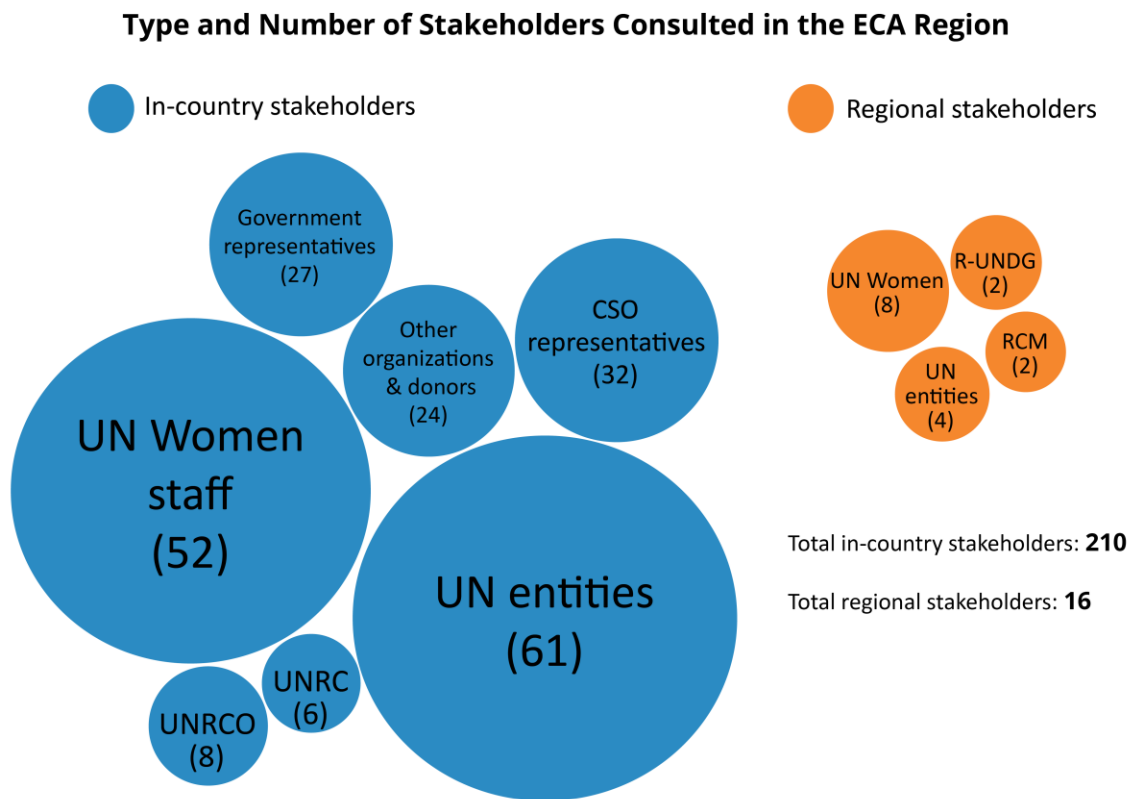
The evaluation team members signed the UN Women evaluation code of conduct,¹² ensured the confidentiality of interviewed stakeholders. The team acted with cultural sensitivity and paid particular attention to protocols, codes and recommendations relevant to their interactions with women.

Data collection methods

The following methods were used to collect data for the evaluation. Please see Volume II, Appendix III for a list of stakeholders consulted and Volume II, Appendix IV for the list of documents cited.

Interviews: All individual and group interviews followed agreed-upon interview protocols tailored to categories of stakeholders and aligned with the overall evaluation framework. Interviews conducted were semi-structured but flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee discussed.

Figure 1:1 Stakeholders consulted



¹² The UN Women evaluation code of conduct is based on UNEG Ethical Guidelines for evaluation and UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system to ensure that the rights of individuals involved are respected.

Document and secondary data review: During the inception phase, the evaluation team reviewed selected key documents as they were made available. During the data collection phase, the team carried out an in-depth review of regional documents to generate information to address the key evaluation criteria and questions outlined in the evaluation matrix. Relevant information was identified, sorted, analysed and triangulated by criteria and key questions in the matrix and by other key foci that emerged during the course of the evaluation.

For those countries in the region where UN Women is a non-resident agency (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro, and Turkmenistan)¹³, document review and secondary data review were the only source of data. Available data came from reports compiled by the UN Women ECA Regional Office and included reports on questionnaires sent to Gender Theme Groups, some narrative reports of the RO, and Resident Coordinator Annual Reports. These data were used to contrast coordinated efforts in GEEW across the UN system in the region, including in the absence of UN Women.

Portfolio review: The purpose of the portfolio review was to provide a broad overview of the country level dimension across key variables. The review included 13 of the 14 countries in the ECA region¹⁴ (including the multi-country office [MCO] in Kazakhstan) where UN Women has a Country Office with full delegation of authority (DoA) or a programme presence, and one country where UN Women is not present (Montenegro).¹⁵ Documents reviewed included: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and evaluations of UNDAFs, UN Women Strategic Notes and Annual Work Plan (AWP), Gender Theme Group (GTG) plans and reports and minutes, other thematic group plans and minutes, Resident Coordinator (RC) Annual Reports, UN Women evaluation reports, UN Women country level annual reports, Common Country Assessments (CCAs), and concluding observations of the Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The evaluation team drew mainly from 2012 -2015 documentation, with greater weight given to the most recent Strategic Notes and UN Women reports from 2013 and 2014. The team also analysed documents from 2011 and pre-2011 (such as evaluations and reports of both UN Women and UN system) when available. Results of the portfolio review are provided in Volume II, Appendix V.

Case studies: The purpose of case studies was to illustrate how the UN Women’s UN system coordination mandate has been implemented in ECA countries, describe the perceived contributions to results or key achievements, identify lessons and

Countries Selected for Case Study Field Missions

Albania CO: Delivering as One with full delegation of authority (European country)

Kyrgyzstan CO: CO with full delegation of authority (Central Asian country)

Kosovo: Post conflict country with programme presence managed by Regional Office

Turkey: Programme presence managed by RO, where the formal representative is the ECA Regional Director

Countries Selected for Virtual Consultations

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Delivering as One, CO with full delegation of authority

Georgia: CO with full delegation of authority

Serbia: Post conflict country with programme presence managed by the Regional Office

¹³ Turkmenistan was a non-presence country for UN Women until 2015 as it progressively hired staff under the authority of the MCO in Kazakhstan.

¹⁴ Turkmenistan was excluded as UN Women’s presence was established after the period covered in this evaluation.

¹⁵ Montenegro was one of the non-presence countries reviewed in the portfolio review carried out as part of the Corporate Evaluation on UN Women’s Contribution to UN System Coordination on GEEW and therefore it was also included in the ECA regional portfolio review.

good practices, and explore relationships between country-level actors and how those relationships affect different modalities of UN system coordination. The case studies are therefore learning-focused and their design is primarily illustrative. The case study countries were selected to reflect UN Women’s operational/structural diversity in the region.

Four countries were selected for field missions to collect in-depth data, and three countries were selected for virtual consultations which were conducted through interviews by phone and Skype (see sidebar).¹⁶

During the case study field missions, which were conducted over five days in each country,¹⁷ the evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, group interviews, and/or participatory sessions or workshops with: UN Women staff, representatives of the UNCT, members of the Gender Theme Group, the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and the Gender Specialist/advisor to the RC (if present in the country), representatives of national women’s machineries (NWM) and central ministries, and representatives of gender advocates from civil society organizations (CSOs).

Regional consultations: The evaluation team visited the UN regional hub in Istanbul in order to carry out interviews with representatives of UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Other regional stakeholders, such as the R-UNDG Chair and representatives of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), chaired by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, were consulted via telephone and Skype.

Survey: To a more limited extent, the evaluation drew on data from three on-line surveys targeting: 1) UN Women staff (country level), 2) GTG and other thematic groups (country level), and 3) Regional stakeholders including members of the R-UNDG, RCM, and inter-agency working groups in ECA – such as the Peer Support Group (PSG), Program Advisory Group (PAG), and the Regional Working Group on Gender. The survey data are presented in Volume II, Appendix VI, VII and VIII. Each questionnaire was online for at least two weeks with reminders sent out each week.

Table 1:1 ECA Region Surveys – Overview

Target group	Survey Period	Population	Responses ¹⁸ (%)
UN Women staff at country level	On line for 3 weeks Nov. 27 – Dec. 18, 2015	56	14 (25%)
GTG and other working groups at country level	On line for 6+ weeks Dec. 9, 2015 – Jan. 21, 2016	496	102 (22%)
Regional stakeholders	On line for 2+ weeks Jan. 12 - 29, 2016	55	11 (20%)

¹⁶ Interviews for virtual consultations were conducted primarily with UN Women staff, Heads of UN agencies and the Resident Coordinator. One government representative and a couple gender focal points in UN agencies were also interviewed. Consequently, virtual consultations in these three countries did not yield as much information as the field missions to four countries.

¹⁷ For the Turkey case study, there was a 3-day visit to Ankara.

¹⁸ The responses reflect the number of completed surveys. If respondents began, but did not complete the survey, their responses were not counted. That explains why the N on some questions (especially at the beginning of the questionnaires) may be higher.

The response rates for the surveys were considered reasonable given that the populations were sometimes difficult to target (especially at country level), contact information may be unreliable, and there was little incentive to respond.

Data analysis

The following methods of data analysis have been employed to make evaluative judgments against the agreed upon basis for assessment, as outlined in the evaluation matrix.

- **Descriptive analysis** was used to understand the different contexts in which UN Women carries out its UN system coordination mandate, different stakeholder perspectives with regard to the main evaluation issues, and to describe UN Women's work in this area. Descriptive analysis was the first step, before moving on to more interpretative approaches.
- **Content analysis** constituted the core of the qualitative analysis. Documents and interview notes from virtual consultations and case studies were analysed to identify common trends, themes, and patterns for each of the key units of analysis. Content analysis for all 14 ECA countries was also used to flag diverging views and opposing trends. Emerging issues and trends became the raw material for crafting preliminary findings/observations that were subsequently refined to feed into the draft and final evaluation reports.
- **Quantitative and statistical analysis** was used to interpret quantitative data. Mostly descriptive statistics were used to describe different characteristics of the portfolio as categorized by geographic location, policy area, or other criteria, and for survey data.
- **Comparative analysis** was used to examine evidence across different countries and in relation to normative or intergovernmental and operational work. The evaluation also sought to contrast and compare UN Women's experience in implementing its UN system coordination mandate in Country Offices with Delegation of Authority and those with programme presence only (see section 2.5). Where relevant, countries that are under a Delivering as One framework are also contrasted and compared with those that are not. Comparative analysis helped to identify good practices in coordination, innovative approaches, and lessons learned. This type of analysis was used throughout the process, to examine information and data from stakeholder consultations and document/file and literature review.

These mixed methods purposefully influenced the analytical process in that they provide opportunities for triangulation and thus enhance credibility of findings through the convergence and overlapping of different methods. This means ensuring that findings are supported from a wide range of sources, as well as by various forms of data (subjective, objective, quantitative, as appropriate and available).

Evaluation constraints and limitations

The evaluation faced some constraints and limitations, most of which were anticipated in the evaluation inception report and work plan. However, in general, the evaluation team applied three working principles to the phases of data collection and analysis: (a) use of a highly adaptive and iterative approach, endeavoring to inform the data interpretation and analysis with new information as it became available; (b) where data from countries were missing, reference findings on the issue from other sources (e.g., global evaluations); and (c) exercise transparency at all stages of the data handling and in indicating the limitations, when presenting the data.

- **Evaluability:** Although UN Women has a corporate strategy and results framework for its UN system and interagency mandate (updated in 2014), this is not well known at the field level, nor is this explicitly incorporated in the ECA Strategic Note. In addition, a newly drafted UN Women Theory of Change (ToC) for UN System-wide Coordination for GEEW had not yet been implemented or tested by the ECA Regional Office. Evaluability was further limited by the type of information available (which was inconsistent across countries) and by lack of baseline data on UN system coordination on GEEW before the creation of UN Women. Also, since aggregable, systematic data were not often available, the team sought to highlight examples from the data that offered a perspective on the potential that UN Women has to achieve results with its coordination mandate.
- **Timing:** The UN Women ECA Regional Office was established in January 2014 and is now implementing its first Strategic Note. In many ways, it may be too early to make judgments about effectiveness with regard to its coordination role, especially at the regional level. The evaluation team adopted a forward-looking approach for the regional level.
- **Portfolio review:** Available country reports did not address all of the issues of interest to the evaluation, nor were they consistent in format or content. Consequently it was difficult to collate and analyse data across countries for each aspect considered in the portfolio analysis framework.
- **Surveys:** There are a few inherent limitations of online survey research. The respondents self-select, which introduces some bias in the responses. The researcher has less control over the lists of respondents (in this evaluation, the lists were provided by UN Women), and there is no way of knowing if the individual targeted filled out the questionnaire or if another person did it on his/her behalf (due to forwarding of messages). There is no agreement in the literature on what constitutes an acceptable response rate.¹⁹ Thus, the evaluation team used survey data with caution and as a supportive additional source of data to complement the richer qualitative data found in the case studies.
- **Triangulation:** The evaluation relied considerably on perception data which offered a diversity of stakeholder perspectives on UN Women's coordination mandate. This supports a systems perspective that values the positionality of different respondent groups and their interests in the success of UN system coordination for GEEW. At the same time, reported data for this evaluation were not always supported by factual evidence and where this is the case, the team makes this limitation explicit.

¹⁹ For example, see the discussion on : <http://socialnorms.org/what-is-an-acceptable-survey-response-rate/>

2 Evaluation Context

2.1 Overview

This chapter describes the context for the regional evaluation and includes sections on the UN system, the ECA region, the UN system in ECA, UN Women's internal context, and UN Women's system-wide and interagency mandate.

2.2 UN System

The creation of UN Women and the entity's coordination mandate need to be understood against the backdrop of broader reform processes within the United Nations Development System (UNDS) that have centered on the notion of institutional coherence.

Over the past two decades, United Nations (UN) Member States have reiterated calls for the UN to increase its efficiency and effectiveness and reduce duplication and fragmentation in the UN. In various resolutions and meetings, they have encouraged UN agencies to think, plan and work together coherently to deliver results better, to improve the relevance of initiatives, and to maximize collective impact.

The reforms of the last decade have culminated in the Delivering as One (DaO) approach and, more recently, in the adoption of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), that should enable the UN to function more effectively and foster more collaboration. Nearly a decade after a group of eight countries piloted the DaO approach, more than 50 countries had voluntarily adopted (or requested) the approach as of November 2015.²⁰

These reforms also paved the way to the creation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in 1997, to the establishment of UNDG regional teams and of its technical support unit, the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO). It is, since 2008, one of the three pillars of the UN system Chief Executive Board for coordination (CEB). Its purpose was to create a regional layer of management that would ensure common accountability and provide countries technical support and policy guidance more effectively than what could have been provided from headquarters. As such, these entities and their underlying guidance are the cornerstone of UN Women's ability to implement its GEEW coordination mandate at regional and country levels. Inter-governmental processes such as the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) also provide a means for enhancing horizontal coherence and accountability in the UN. The QCPR is an important directive for UN entities (primarily Funds and Programmes) that, by explicitly addressing GEEW, validates and re-affirms UN system milestones related to GEEW (including gender mainstreaming performance standards such as UN-SWAP and the UNCT Gender Scorecard). The QCPR is an important directive for UN entities (primarily Funds and Programmes) that, by explicitly addressing GEEW, validates and re-affirms UN system milestones related to GEEW (including gender mainstreaming performance standards such as UN-SWAP and the UNCT Gender Scorecard).

Nevertheless, progress in relation to the DaO implementation has been uneven and the UN system continues to be criticized for its continued lack of coherence, i.e. a seeming inability to work together or to coalesce around an agreed system of priorities. One important reason for the noted challenges is the continued fragmentation of the UN System. Specialized UN agencies continue to have separate governing bodies, and accountabilities of staff at the country, regional and headquarters level tend to be agency-specific. In consequence horizontal accountability has

²⁰ See: <https://undg.org/home/guidance-policies/delivering-as-one/>

remained weak and effective coordination at the country level remains largely dependent on the leadership skills of the respective Resident Coordinator.²¹ In addition, inter-agency coordination continues to be based on voluntary participation and lacks strong incentives including accountability measures.

2.3 The ECA Region

Overview

The ECA region is large and diverse with respect to language, culture, religion, natural resources, and political systems. It can be categorized in three sub-regions:

- Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), with a population of approximately 67 million people
- South Caucasus and the Western Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Russian Federation, and Ukraine), home to 219 million people
- Western Balkans and Turkey (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey) with approximately 97 million inhabitants (76 million of whom live in Turkey).^{22 23}

Economic Dynamics

All countries covered by the evaluation are classified as either lower-middle income (Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan) or upper-middle income (Albania, BiH, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) according to the 2014 World Bank classification.²⁴

Despite the fact that overall poverty rates have been declining in the post-Soviet countries, economic growth has remained slow and economic inequality is on the rise due to the global financial crisis, the oil price shock, and geopolitical tensions, including the conflict in Ukraine.²⁵ The region's poor are predominately rural and disadvantaged groups; in particular ethnic minorities, the disabled, and migrant populations have fewer opportunities to access social and economic benefits.²⁶ Instability in the region is often driven by conflict due to water scarcity, community and ethnic tensions, and border disputes. Recent flashpoints include the conflict in Ukraine and the crisis along the Turkey, Syria, and Iraq border, which has resulted in large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, a significant proportion of whom are women.

Labour migration is prevalent in the region and migrants are often employed in low-wage jobs and unregulated industries, making them vulnerable to dangerous work environments and exploitation.

²¹ UN DESA, Report of the Secretary-General on the QCPR, page 26

²² The Russian Federation (pop. 143.8 million) and Croatia (pop. 4.238 million) were not covered by the evaluation.

²³ Population data from: The World Bank. (2014). Data-Countries and Economies. Retrieved from <http://data.worldbank.org/country>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The World Bank. (2016). Europe and Central Asia Overview. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/overview>

²⁶ UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. (2015). Strategic Note (Narrative Section), 2015-2017.

Women may be victims of human trafficking and as such suffer various forms of abuse without recourse to legal assistance, medical and social services.²⁷

Political Dynamics

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, transition in the region to new forms of government has been largely democratic. However, key elements of democracy, such as free media, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, and an open and trusting political culture are often lacking or absent.²⁸

In general, the political dynamics in the ECA region are strongly shaped by the extent and nature of ties to the European Union (EU). In the Western Balkans and Turkey, the EU is the main contributor to stabilization efforts and the ongoing reconciliation process that followed the 1990s Balkans wars. These countries share the common goal of EU integration, and the EU agenda drives domestic policy priorities and reform processes. In the South Caucasus and Western CIS, some countries have geared their policies towards EU integration, e.g. Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, while others have opted for alternatives, such as Eurasian integration (Belarus).²⁹

At the moment, five countries have started or are waiting to start the EU accession process, including Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Potential candidates, i.e. those that were promised the prospect of joining when they are ready, include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.³¹ Application is more complicated for Kosovo, the independence of which has not yet been recognized by all EU Member States. Moreover, negotiations remain stalemated until both Serbia and Kosovo can agree on how the Serbian minority in the north of Kosovo will be treated, administered, and protected.³²

Political stability in some countries remains fragile. Cross-border conflict is common in the region – border disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and between Georgia and Russia (since the 2008 war over South Ossetia); internal conflicts, between Turks and Kurds in Turkey, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan; turmoil in Moldova and armed conflict in Ukraine. The crises in Ukraine and along the Turkey-Syria-Iraq border are new emerging dimensions within the larger frame of conflict in the

Political uncertainty and changes in government affect the work of UN Women and the UN system

While a change in government can be positive, it can also disrupt relations that were forged between UN agencies and government counterparts, as people in positions of power are replaced or shifted.

UN Women in Albania, for example, had made several steps forward with its main counterpart ministry. With personnel changes, some of the gains may no longer be guaranteed, and establishing new relationships of trust will take time.

In Moldova, parliamentary elections reversed progress on gender equality, as elected women MPs were replaced with men MPs. The credibility of the political parties who were expected to adopt “temporary special measures” (TSMs) to ensure women’s political participation and introduce them into relevant national legislation was lost. The government approval of the TSM package was achieved in the end, albeit incidentally, with the help of an ally in the Prime Minister’s office.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UNDP. (2016). UNDP in Europe and Central Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/regioninfo/>

³⁰ RMS Search Result for ECA Region, Reporting Year 2014. Entry for Moldova.

³¹ European Commission. (2016, January 8). European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index_en.htm

³² <http://www.dw.com/en/who-is-where-on-the-path-to-eu-membership/a-16748597>, accessed 6 Jan. 2016.

region. The Syrian refugee crisis is having a significant impact on Turkey and the Balkans, and the vast majority of internally displaced persons and refugees are female.³³ In Kosovo, conflict persists in the North Mitrovica region which has a Serb majority, and the electoral violence in 2013 led to delays in some of UN Women activities.

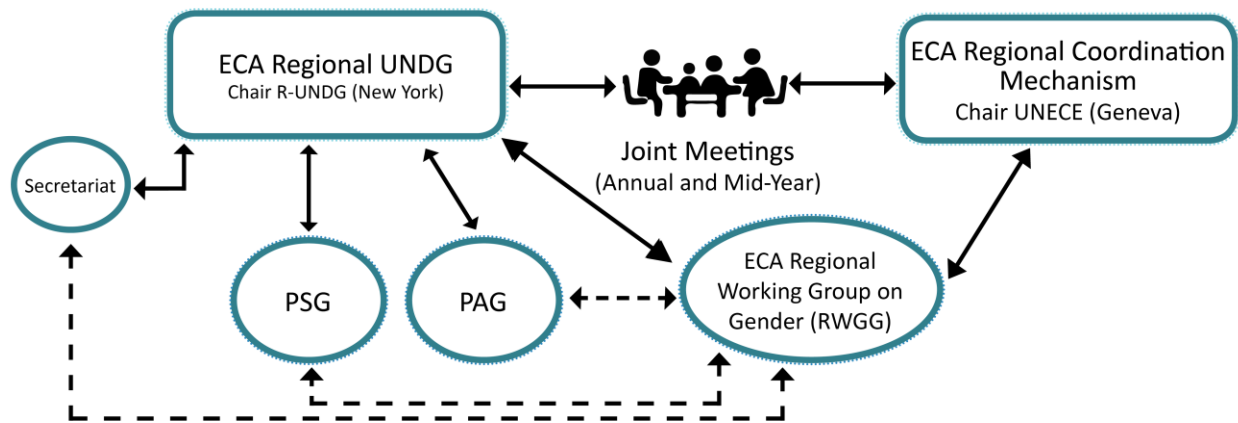
GEEW Dynamics

Women and girls in the ECA region face particular challenges. Overall, women are less represented than men in the labour market and as political and economic decision makers. As noted above, labour migration is common, and women working abroad are often employed in low-wage, unregulated industries, such as domestic services, putting them that at greater risk of exploitation. Violence against women, including domestic violence, is pervasive despite seven of the countries covered by the evaluation having signed and five having ratified the Istanbul Convention.³⁴ Child marriage is also prevalent in a number of countries (for example in Albania, Turkey, and Kyrgyzstan) and within certain communities (particularly the Roma), and girls from disadvantaged groups face greater barriers to education, healthcare, and social services.³⁵ All ECA countries have ratified CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, with the exception of Uzbekistan, which has taken no action on the Optional Protocol. However, significant gaps in implementation remain.

2.4 UN System in ECA

As in other regions, the UN in ECA is organized according to two primary regional coordination mechanisms that aim to ensure coherence in the activities of the UN system in which UN Women’s RD is involved as representative of a member agency.

Figure 2:1 UN Organization in ECA Region



³³ UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. “Strategic Note (Narrative Section), 2015-2017,” 2015, p. 3.

³⁴ These include Albania, BiH, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine. Albania, BiH, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey have ratified the convention.

³⁵ UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. (2015). Strategic Note (Narrative Section), 2015-2017.

- The Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), led by UNECE, was established in 1998 to coordinate the work programmes of United Nations entities at the regional level (E/1998/65).
- The Regional United Nations Development Group (R-UNDG) has a focus on the UN's operational work at a country level,³⁶ including regional programming. Under the R-UNDG, UN Women is also involved in the ECA Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) and a potential Program Advisory Group (PAG).³⁷

Within this broader framework, there is an array of additional inter-agency working groups have been developed in recent years, in response to regional dynamics, demands for greater coordination, and the creation of a new UN hub in Istanbul.

- The ECA Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) comprises 14 UN agencies³⁸ and was established to provide guidance, quality assurance and oversight to the UNCTs in 18 countries in the ECA region. Specifically, in developing their UNDAFs/One Programmes; reviewing challenges and obstacles, and then providing guidance on how to address these; reviewing and reporting on lessons learned and emerging good practices from common country programming processes, and then sharing these with the R-UNDG for consideration regionally and then globally.³⁹
- An ECA Regional Program Advisory Group (PAG), which is under discussion, would comprise 14 UN agencies⁴⁰ with the aim of facilitating synergies in the ECA R-UNDG and thus strengthen joint positioning of agencies and the ONE voice in the ECA region and at the country level. The group would focus on regional inter-agency work in areas of (i) analytics, (ii) advocacy, (iii) partnerships, and (iv) programming.⁴¹
- In 2015, the ECA Regional Working Group on Gender (UN-RWGG) was established as a mechanism under both the RCM and the R-UNDG. In the first year, the RWGG is being co- led by UN Women and UNFPA; under its new TORs UN Women will permanently hold the co-chair position while the other will rotate annually. The main aim

Objectives of the RWGG

Provide guidance and technical support to UNCTs, GTGs and partners on gender at the national level;
 Enhance joint regional responses to GEEW related issues in ECA by supporting stronger joint programming initiatives;
 Increase effective and efficient use of human and financial resources allocated to gender-related initiatives;
 Improve coordination, communication and information sharing on lessons learned and emerging good practices at the country level in ECA region.⁴²

³⁶ Established under ECOSOC resolution 1998/46

³⁷ The PAG has not been endorsed by Regional Directors as its TORs are still under discussion. Recent developments that occurred after the field visits indicate an alternative option to create “issue-based coalitions” under the R-UNDG is now on the table.

³⁸ UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, ILO, FAO, OHCHR, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, WFP, WHO

³⁹ Regional UNDG Team for Europe and Central Asia – Terms of Reference

⁴⁰ ILO, OHCHR, UN Women, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, WFP, WHO

⁴¹ Program Advisory Group – Terms of Reference – Draft July 2015

⁴² Ibid, p. 1

for this group is to ensure a coordinated UN system approach to promoting GEEW in ECA.⁴³

In the ECA region, there has been reasonable cooperation between the RCM and the R-UNDG. The R-UNDG and RCM have recently begun to organize back-to-back annual and mid-year meetings, for example. Regional stakeholders interviewed note that, overall, there is a collaborative spirit and an environment conducive to coordination. At the same time, some of challenges (for coordination) of this architecture of the UN still persist, such as:

- Lack of clarity in the respective mandates of the R-UNDG and the RCM often result in perceptions of overlap, competition and duplication of efforts between these two groups; this has been accentuated as the R-UNDG has increasingly moved to upstream policy work.⁴⁴
- Different definitions of what constitutes a “region,” with ECE (established in 1947) including 56 member countries that include many in Western Europe that do not fall under the remit of the UNDG.
- Different “hubs” or locations for regional management offices, with several entities such as UNECE and UNICEF based in Geneva, FAO and WHO in other cities (respectively in Budapest and Copenhagen), and the Istanbul hub established in 2014, initially bringing together ROs of UNDP, UNFPA, and UN Women..
- As at the country level, the entities are vertically accountable and have little incentive to collaborate creating a context where interagency coordination is sometimes seen as optional
- In addition, there are also limited human resources in the regional offices of UN entities, which limits their abilities to make long-term commitments and contribute to inter-agency work at regional level. Because participation in these inter-agency fora is voluntary, each Regional Director must decide on how best to assign her/his staff resources.

UN Women’s coordination mandate at the regional level is set in this complex set of institutional arrangements that can make it difficult to maximize synergies, reduce duplication, and achieve greater coherence on GEEW. More specifically, the implications of these dynamics for enhanced collaboration across entities on GEEW include: a) constraints for sharing ideas and innovating approaches to more transformative gender work, partly due to geographic distance and partly due to competition; b) often not being able to gather all of the relevant actors around the table, on a particular issue (e.g. humanitarian and crisis response) because of limited human resources specialized on GEEW in some of the entities; c) crafting coherent responses to regional issues affecting gender inequality.

2.5 UN Women’s Internal Context

UN Women was established by GA resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence to assist Member States and the United Nations system in progressing more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.⁴⁵

⁴³ Terms of Reference Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Working Group on Gender, January 2016

⁴⁴ Joint Inspection Unit. (2015). Cooperation among United Nations Regional Commissions. Pp.37. Online: https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2015_3_English.pdf

⁴⁵ Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN Women. (2013). *Progress made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2011-2013* (Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director No. UNW/2013/3).

UN Women operates under an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General. It comprises Pillar 1 on Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships and Pillar 2 on Policy and programme activities, each led by an Assistant-Secretary-General. UN Women's structure also includes the Management and Administration Division, the Human Resources Office, and the Independent Evaluation Office. In addition, there are six Regional Offices (in Nairobi, Cairo, Dakar, Bangkok, Panama and Istanbul), six Multi-Country Offices (MCO), 47 Country Offices (CO) and 30 Programme Presence (PP) countries.⁴⁶

Throughout the period under review, and continuing today, UN Women has undergone a rapid evolution that included but went beyond the initial consolidation of its predecessor entities into a new UN agency. Notable changes included a change in leadership, with Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka taking over from Michelle Bachelet as UN Women Executive Director in August 2013, and the decentralization process that involved setting up regional offices.

UN Women has been present in the ECA region since its creation in 2011, and prior to that UNIFEM was operational in the region.

Structure and roles

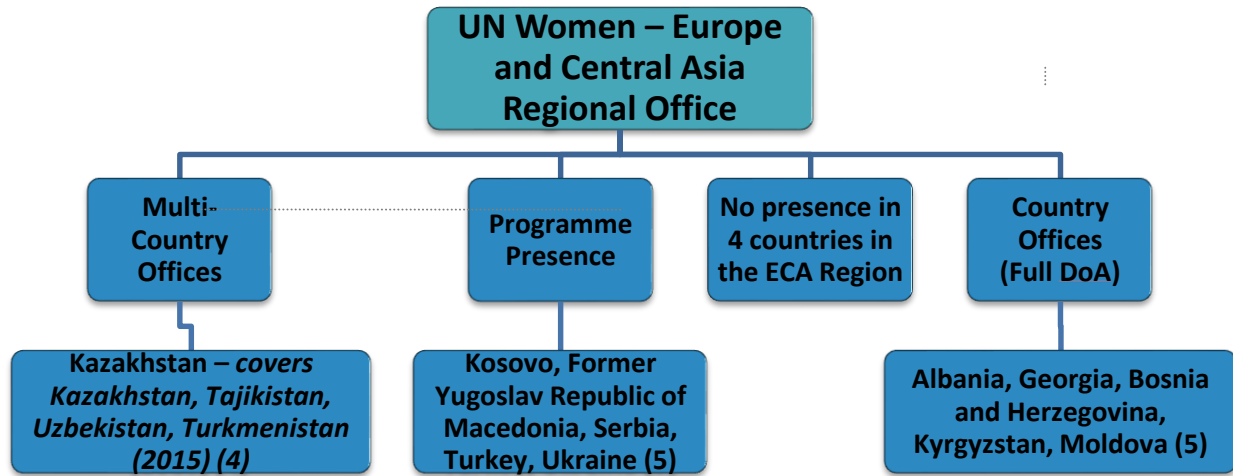
In 2011, two Sub-Regional Offices were operational in ECA: the former Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) office in Slovakia, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) office in Kazakhstan.

The Regional Office (RO) in Istanbul, Turkey was established in January 2014, and has been functioning under the 2014 bridge plan that effectively transitioned UN Women to the current regional architecture in which the Slovakia office was decommissioned and the Kazakhstan office became a multi-country office (MCO) with delegated authority for four Programme Presence countries. As shown in Figure 2.2, the current RO provides support and oversight to five Country Offices (COs) and to the MCO in Kazakhstan⁴⁷ and direct support to five programme presence countries.

⁴⁶ UN Women. (2015). Integrated budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the biennium 2016-2017, page 13.

⁴⁷ Turkmenistan was a non-presence country for UN Women until 2015.

Figure 2:2 UN Women ECA Regional Architecture



Regional Office

The Regional Office and its regional director obtained full delegation of authority from headquarters to supervise all UN Women representatives in the region at the beginning of 2014.⁴⁸

All regional offices are responsible for “managerial and programme oversight, quality assurance, technical and operational support and policy advice for country offices in their region, including with regard to UN Women normative function.”⁴⁹ UN Women RO thus provides an array of services to MCO, CO and programme presence countries in the areas of:

- Strategic Programme Development and Policy/Technical Advice
- Oversight, Programme, and Operational Support and Quality Assurance
- UN Interagency Coordination,
- Intergovernmental Support
- Representation, Communications and Advocacy
- Strategic Partnerships and Resource Mobilization
- Knowledge Management⁵⁰

The ECA RO has functions that relate to country support (for M/CO and Programme Presence) and to the regional level (also described in Section 2.4), where the RO is involved in key interagency mechanisms including the R-UNDG, the RCM and more specifically in the PSG (ensuring GEEW mainstreaming in CCA/UNDAF), and through the RWGG (to provide interagency coordination support to UNCTs and GTGs).

Country Offices and Multi-country Offices

COs and MCOs are offices where there is a Representative (P-5 or D-1) and sufficient capacity to take charge of delegation of authority. In the initial design of the regional architecture, sufficient capacity was ensured by a minimum of five staff (Representative, Operations Officer, and administrative staff) in accordance with recommendations from field capacity assessment.⁵¹ Delegation of authority for COs and MCOs means they have the authority to manage country programmes and conduct lower-value transactions up to USD 1 million. The Representative is the Head of Agency and sits on the UNCT.⁵²

The main difference for MCOs is that the Representative is simultaneously in charge of more than one country and also sits in multiple UNCTs.

⁴⁸ According to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2012/11) delegation of authority for ROs means having the authority to approve “medium value transactions, conduct national recruitment, supervise COs and MCOs and develop regional strategies and approaches. This includes authority to approve projects up to USD 3 million.

⁴⁹ UN Women. (2012). Regional architecture: administrative, budgetary and financial implications and implementation plan - Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director; and UN WOMEN ECARO. (2015). Europe and Central Asia Regional Office Support Services Istanbul/Turkey (December 2015).

⁵⁰ The full range of services is outlined in “Europe and Central Asia Regional Office Support Services, Istanbul, Turkey.”

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² ACABQ. (2012). Regional architecture, progress towards a harmonized cost-recovery policy and proposed approach for calculating the operational reserve for the United Nations Entity for Gender - Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and UN Women. (2014). Report on the Implementation of UN Women’s Regional Architecture (Nov 2012 - Nov 2014).

Programme presence

Programme presence offices are led by senior gender specialists acting as advisors to the UNRC and UNCT or by project personnel; unlike Country Offices, they do not have Representatives.⁵³

In practice, programme presence offices in the ECA region are mostly staffed with Gender Specialists (Serbia, Turkey, Macedonia, and Kosovo), which in 2016 are funded by 50 per cent of non-core resources raised by UN Women HQ (with the other half being covered by the RO's core resources);⁵⁴ only the Ukraine office has a National Programme Coordinator funded from non-core resources. However, the type of presence and autonomy of these offices vary significantly.

Table 2.1 Overview of programme presence countries

	Kosovo	FYR Macedonia	Serbia	Ukraine	Turkey
Position	Gender specialist / NOC	Gender specialist / P3	Gender specialist / P3	National Programme Coordinator / NOC	Gender specialist / NOC (Regional Director / D1 is the Head of Office)
Status with RC	Acts as <i>de facto</i> Head of Office	Formal advisor to RC	Formal advisor to RC	Limited presence / project focused presence	Formal advisor to RC in RCO
Status with UNCT	Full member of UNKT ⁵⁵	Full member of UNCT	Formal advisor to UNCT	Limited presence / project focus presence	RD full member of UNCT
GTG	UN Women chairs	UN Women chairs	UN Women chairs	UN Women chairs	RD chairs the GTG
Extended GTG	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Approx. additional staff #	8 service contract holders	3 service contract holders tied to a project	4 service contract holders	None	None

Restructuring

The roll out of the UN Women Regional Architecture ended in 2014 with the completion of the merger of the two former UNIFEM sub-regional offices in Kazakhstan and Slovakia into a single Regional Office in Turkey. This had different effects on field offices, as shown in Table 2.1.

⁵³ UN Women. (2012). Regional architecture: administrative, budgetary and financial implications and implementation plan - Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director.

⁵⁴ These resources were mobilized from Sweden's development cooperation (SIDA) by UN Women HQ but this funding is expected to end in December 2016.

⁵⁵ In the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244(1999) the UNKT is the equivalent to the UNCT. See case study for more details.

Table 2.2 Implications of Regional Architecture for UN Women offices

Country	September 2012 ⁵⁶	2014 ⁵⁷
Slovakia	Sub-Regional Office	Closed
Kazakhstan	Sub-Regional Office	Multi-Country Office
Tajikistan	Country Office	Programme Presence (MCO)
Uzbekistan	No presence	Programme Presence (MCO)
Turkmenistan	No presence	No presence (MCO)
Albania	Country Office	Country Office
Kyrgyzstan	Country Office	Country Office
Georgia	Country Office	Country Office
Moldova	Country Office	Country Office
BiH	Programme presence	Country Office
Kosovo	Programme presence	Programme presence
Serbia	Programme presence	Programme presence
Macedonia	Programme presence	Programme presence
Turkey	No presence	Regional Office (Istanbul) Programme presence (Ankara)
Ukraine	No presence	Programme presence

As the sub-regional offices closed, well-established programme presence offices in Kosovo and Macedonia were temporarily put under the authority of the newly created BiH Country Office before being assigned to the Regional Office in Istanbul later in 2014. This transition not only affected operations in the two programme presence offices, but also put considerable strain on the newly created BiH CO which also needed guidance from the RO when its staffing process was still ongoing. A further clarification on the status of Turkmenistan is also in order; it has been a non-resident country for UN Women until 2015, which is the reason it is not shown in the above table.

Strategy and Resources

As noted above, in 2014 the ECA RO operated under a bridge plan that emphasized the establishment of operational capacities in the region. The 2015 Strategic Note is the first multi-year strategic framework for the new RO, and is aligned with the UN Women Strategic Plan for 2014-2017.

The RO Strategic Note for 2015-2017 has prioritized work in three impact areas:⁵⁸

- Impact 4 : Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women leadership and participation

⁵⁶ ACABQ. (2012). Regional architecture, progress towards a harmonized cost-recovery policy and proposed approach for calculating the operational reserve for the United Nations Entity for Gender - Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

⁵⁷ UN Women ECA. (2014, November 25). Strategic Note (2015-2017).

⁵⁸ Strategic Note (Narrative Section) UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (2015-2017) (Version 25 November 2014).

- Impact 5 : Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities
- Impact 6 : A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women’s empowerment is in place and is applied through action by Governments and other stakeholders at all levels.

In terms of coordination, the Strategic Note emphasizes UN Women’s engagement in UNDAF processes in 2014 and early 2015 due to the need to support the 12 countries engaged in UNDAF roll-out. Its coordination support emphasizes its technical advice and training in CCA/UNDAF processes (through the PSG), training to strengthen inter-agency gender capacity (at regional level and UNCTs), and the development of knowledge sharing platforms to support GTGs in the region and to facilitate south-south and triangular cooperation.

The total planned budget for UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (including non-core to be mobilized) in the 2015 Annual Work Plan was US\$ 7,583,303.⁵⁹ Out of this, there is more than US\$ 1.5 million allocated for the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework (OEEF). The Output Cluster 1 (focused on UN coordination and partnership) has a budget of US\$ 736, 683, which includes CO support and Regional operations, as well as allocations to the five programme presence countries as well as to the 3 programme presence offices under MCO. Almost 75 per cent of the budget for Output Cluster 1 is targeted for UN coordination activities. This budget also served to cover a newly created coordination officer in BiH CO. At the time of the work planning for 2015, UN Women had to mobilize almost 40 per cent of the planned budget for Development Results Frameworks (DRF), including the Regional DRF and DRFs for five programme presence countries.

Staffing

When the RO was established in 2014, only 5 of the 18 requested staff positions were filled. The budget of the 2015 AWP indicates that by the end of 2014, 14 of the 18 positions were approved, and the remaining four positions were requested. At the time of the field visit in November 2015, the RO had filled 15 of the 18 positions. The regional policy advisors had just come on board. Given the unique context of the ECA region (number of MICS, limited ODA funding, and consequent demands on RO to raise funds), a position for a Partnership and Resource Mobilization Specialist covered by core resources was approved and hiring took place in fall 2015.

2.6 UN Women’s System-wide and Interagency Mandate

UN Women’s mandate is guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including its twelve critical areas of concern, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and applicable United Nations instruments, standards and resolutions that support, address and contribute to gender equality and the empowerment and the advancement of women.⁶⁰ UN Women’s mandate is three-fold and includes the following intergovernmental normative, operational, and interagency coordination aspects:

- Normative work: to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), ECOSOC, and the General Assembly in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms;

⁵⁹ Based on data from the RO ECA AWP, DRF, and OEEF 2015 from 23/03/2015 and 13/03/2015 respectively

⁶⁰ A/RES/64/289, para. 51.

- Operational work: to help Member States implement international standards and forge effective partnerships with civil society; and
- Coordination work: to promote the accountability of the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress, and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the UN.⁶¹

UN Women often refers to its “composite” mandate that integrates these three functions and differentiates it from other entities in the UN system, which may have only one or two of the functions.

Nature of the coordination mandate

UN Women’s UN system coordination role on GEEW is its newest role, as it was not formally included in or adopted from the mandates of any of its predecessor entities.

The UN system GEEW coordination role is an “organizational” mandate that is not limited to any one division, unit or level of the organization. Although UN Women has a UN System Coordination Division (in Pillar 1, as described above), it is the Entity as a whole that is responsible for implementing the mandate. In general terms, the Coordination Division and the Policy Division focus on global-level coordinating structures, activities, and processes, while the Programme Division focuses on those at the regional and country level. The Programme Division does, however, engage in coordination work at the global level when it has a programmatic focus (e.g. within the UNDG). The Coordination Division is the custodian of the organization’s coordination strategy and its focus is mainly on system-wide coordination (both on GEEW and in support of large UN coordination processes). However, it also provides support to UN coordination work in UN Women field offices through its interactions with the Strategic Planning & Coordination specialists and the online community of practice.

Key documents prepared at HQ that inform UN Women’s coordination-related activities are UN Women’s Strategic Plans (2011-2013 and 2014-2017) and the 2014 Implementation Strategy for the System-Wide and Inter-Agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women (referred to as its coordination strategy).

There are three dimensions of UN Women’s coordination role, as described in the founding resolution (Par 53) and in its Strategic Plan (2014-2017), and subsequently defined in the UN Women Theory of Change for UN system coordination on GEEW (2015)::

- Leading, by advocating to ensure that relevant gender equality and women’s rights issues are on the UN system-wide agenda
- Promoting accountability, by strengthening capacity, coherence, monitoring and ‘answerability’ for system-wide gender equality mandates, as well as individual agency reporting (e.g., such as in the SWAP)
- Coordinating, by engaging in system-wide and inter-agency efforts to jointly promote and advance gender equality at global, regional and national levels.

The mandate also encompasses support to gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system, since this support was considered by the General Assembly as “an integral part of the work of the Entity.” Furthermore, UN Women has adopted the responsibility (previously the

⁶¹ Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s Contribution to UN-system coordination on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW), Terms of Reference

responsibility of its predecessor entity OSAGI) to follow up on gender-parity commitments in the UN-System.

Coordination in the area of GEEW existed prior to the establishment of UN Women. At the global level, this was facilitated by inter-agency participation in groups such as the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, for example. At the country level, the main inter-agency mechanism was the Gender Theme Group, which was normally chaired by UNFPA. At the regional level in ECA there was no formal structure for coordination specifically on GEEW until the establishment of the Regional Working Group on Gender in late 2015.

Mapping of coordination mechanisms used

UN Women uses a number of mechanisms to implement its coordination mandate in ECA. A mapping of the types of coordination mechanisms is provided below. In Section 3.3 on Effectiveness, the evaluation analyses the effects of these mechanisms (or how UN Women has made contributions to UN system coordination through such mechanisms), recognizing that there is considerable overlap in the leveraging of mechanisms by UN Women for coordination results.

Table 2.3 Mapping of Coordination Mechanisms at Country and Regional Levels

No.	Coordination Mechanism	Country Level	Regional Level
1	Inter-agency fora	Gender Theme Groups, Results Groups on Gender or equivalent Extended GTG that includes external stakeholders Other working groups, e.g. HIV/AIDS thematic group, M&E for UNDAF	Regional United Nations Development Group (R-UNDG) (UN Women participates) UN Regional Coordination Mechanism (UN Women participates) Peer Support Group (UN Women participates) ⁶² Programme Advisory Group) ^{63 64} (UN Women co-chairs) Regional Working Group on Gender ⁶⁵ (UN Women chairs) Inter-agency online platform, “ECA Regional Gender Coordination Group” linking heads of GTGs
2	Gender mainstreaming in UN planning frameworks	Addressing gender dimensions in the CCA/UNDAF documents (inc. evaluations)	Training of trainers for gender mainstreaming in CCA/UNDAFs

⁶² The PSG provides strategic advice to the UNCTs on the UNDAFs and CCAs.

⁶³ The terms of reference (ToR) for the PAG have not been approved yet. Its aim is to improve synergies across UN agencies, such as establishing issues-based coalitions or teams to examine sub-regional issues. Specific objectives include the oversight and quality assurance of inter-agency work at regional and country levels; support to joint programming at country level; and facilitation of inter-agency linkages, coordination and synergies at the regional level.

⁶⁴ Specific to the ECA region.

⁶⁵ Newly established and ToR just completed in December 2015. The idea ensued from the Regional Partnership Framework document. Its aim is to ensure a more coordinated approach to GEEW in the region and to provide joint support to countries, especially around achieving the SDGs.

No.	Coordination Mechanism	Country Level	Regional Level
		Reviewing and mainstreaming gender in Delivering as One programme documents, by UN Women or GTG Research or analysis on gender issues to support the CCA or UNDAF Integrating gender-sensitive SDGs in the planning documents	
3	Joint initiatives under the UNCT	Joint activity planning and implementation for gender mainstreaming, affecting whole of UNCT Joint communications Joint advocacy	
4	Accountability frameworks	UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (the “Scorecard”)	Training on use of scorecard
5	Capacity building of UNCT	Training on gender mainstreaming in UNDAFs Technical advice by UN Women or the GTG to a UN agency on GEEW	Technical support and facilitation of training on gender mainstreaming in UNDAFs to UNCTs through the PSG ⁶⁶
6	Joint action	Joint policy work of one or more agencies to influence national strategies or action plans with UN Women Joint participation in inter-agency or external working groups Joint normative work around international conventions and treaty bodies (CEDAW, UPR, CRC, etc.)	
7	Joint programming	Joint planning of one or more agencies with UN Women Joint programmes of one or more agencies with UN Women Joint programmes established within the Delivering as One framework	Sub-regional joint programmes ⁶⁷

Concept of coordination

UN Women’s draft Theory of Change for UN System-wide Coordination for GEEW (ToC) states: *“coordination is a means, not an end. It must advance concrete development results that change the*

⁶⁶ Training prioritizes countries with no delegation of authority.

⁶⁷ There are also global programmes initiated by UN Women Headquarters that could include countries from different parts of the globe.

options and opportunities for men, women, communities and countries."⁶⁸ Coordination is one of several means – along with normative and operational work – for achieving the six areas of development results outlined in UN Women's Strategic Plan.⁶⁹

The theory of change aims to clarify the envisaged linkages between institutional results in the Coordination Strategy on the one hand (e.g. enhanced UN system coherence and mobilization of joint action on GEEW (performance and delivery) and development results on the other hand. However, the examples of development results provided in the ToC focus on the internal workings of the UN system (e.g. implementation of UN Joint Gender Programmes; UNDAF results frameworks, implementation and evaluation strategies apply a gender perspective) rather than describing tangible changes in the lives of women and men. The theory of change therefore provides insufficient clarity about how coordination efforts are envisaged to translate or contribute to substantive changes on the ground.

The evaluation team referred to the wide range of literature that investigates inter-organizational collaboration as a means of solving social, political, environmental and economic problems. Both within the reviewed literature and within the UN system, the terms 'coordination', 'collaboration' and 'cooperation' and 'partnership' are often used interchangeably to refer to various forms of agencies working together for the purpose of addressing a problem. In this evaluation, and in light of how UN Women describes its coordination mandate, we frame 'coordination' as a relatively broad umbrella term for working together to accomplish a common goal. Coordination can be achieved in various ways that can be based on different degrees of jointness/togetherness.

The reviewed literature, as well as the empirical data collected for this evaluation, indicates that many factors influence the extent, nature, dynamics, and ultimately the results of coordination efforts⁷⁰ (see sidebar). In this evaluation we use the framework suggested by Thomson, Perry and Miller (2007), who argue that collective action is essentially shaped by three key core relationships: reciprocity, trust and reputation.⁷¹ As such, positions of authority and control are typically absent in relations governed by coordination theory.

- **Reciprocity:** This relates to shared values, a clear and shared purpose or reason for coming together, and mutual benefits from participating in a coordinating mechanism or collaboration. This is closely linked to perceptions on whether the share of resources (people, finances) contributed by each partner is appropriate and fair.
- **Trust:** This implies the existence of a common belief among a group that members will make efforts in good faith to behave in accordance with existing commitments, and that other members of the group are committed to the collaboration. Developing trust takes time, which implies the need for repeated interaction among partners. Clear and participatory processes for making decisions, a clear sense of roles and responsibilities in

⁶⁸ UN Women, UN System Wide Coordination for GEEW, UN Women's Theory of Change (Draft 11 May 2015), p. 2.

⁶⁹ The six impact areas of UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 are as follows: 1) Women Leadership and participation in decision making; 2) Women economic empowerment; 3) Eliminating violence against women and girls; 4) Peace and security and humanitarian action; 5) Governance and national planning; 6) Global norms, policies and standards.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Olson, C. A., Balmer, J. T., & Mejicano, G. C. (2011). Factors Contributing to Successful Interorganizational Collaboration: The Case of CS2day. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 31(S1), S3–S12.

⁷¹ Thomson, A. M., Perry, J. L., & Miller, T. K. (2007). Conceptualizing and Measuring Collaboration. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 1–34.

the group, and clear and sufficient channels of communications can facilitate trust within a group.

- **Reputation:** This relates to the extent to which actors (individuals or organizations) are known for their expertise and experience in the area that the collaboration addresses. This is particularly important for those individuals or organizations taking (or aspiring to take) a leadership role among the collaborating actors. Reputation also relates to whether participating organizations have and assign a sufficient number of the right people at the right level to related tasks.⁷²

These ideas/concepts are used in the sections on findings and conclusions.

Factors that Facilitate Coordination

Trust – that others will make good faith efforts to act on their commitments, but trust takes time and implies repeated interaction amongst partners

Shared purpose – having a common agenda and a clear purpose

Shared values – having a common set of beliefs and values about the work, such as a feminist perspective

Mutual benefits – from participating in the coordinating mechanism or collaboration

Decision-making – participatory, as well as clear and transparent process for making decisions

Backbone/leadership – individuals leading the process have good skills for working with others and are able to generate enthusiasm for a common cause

Role clarity – clear leadership and clear roles and responsibilities in the group

Communication – clear and sufficient channels of communication (written and verbal) among members

Commitment to collaboration – clear work plan and objectives to help guide implementation and clear statement of work

Shared monitoring of progress – mechanisms for monitoring / tracking the group’s activities

Resources –sufficient and appropriate in terms of both people and finances; pooled funds tend to be more effective

⁷² Unless individuals representing the various parent organizations are “fully empowered by their organizations to make judgments about what they may commit to [in the collaboration], they will constantly have to check in with their parents before action can happen.” This can exacerbate tensions in the collaboration. (Thompson et al. p. 5)

3 Findings

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the evaluation with regard to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, gender equality and human rights, and organizational efficiency.

3.2 Relevance of UN Women Coordination Work on GEEW

3.2.1 Introduction

This section examines the relevance of UN Women's UN system coordination approach to its stakeholders and in relation to its normative, intergovernmental and operational work. It also considers the strategic positioning of the Entity for carrying out that mandate. The section addresses issues of relevance at the country and regional levels.

3.2.2 Relevance at Country Level

Finding 1: UN Women's context-specific and multi-stakeholder approaches to implementation of its coordination mandate in ECA region have been relevant to stakeholders outside of the UN system and realistic given the need to prioritize the Entity's use of resources.

UN Women has made efforts to clarify its complex UN system coordination mandate and has formally documented a corporate approach through its Implementation Strategy for the System-wide and Inter-agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women (updated January 2014), which has recently been complemented by UN Women's draft Theory of Change for UN System-wide Coordination for GEEW. These corporate strategic documents, developed by the UN Coordination Division at Headquarters, are not yet well known at the field level.

For the ECA region, therefore, no specific guidance on the coordination mandate has been articulated for UN Women's offices. As such, the coordination mandate is not translated into an explicit strategy in any of UN Women's country-level planning documents. How each UN Women office is intended to balance and foster linkages between the normative, operational and coordination mandates is also not addressed as part of any explicit strategy. Consequently each UN Women office has carried out its coordination role in a way that is context specific: according to its own understanding of the coordination role, the resources it has available, and its determination of priorities in the country.

UN Women offices in different countries in the ECA region do not necessarily distinguish "UN system coordination" from broader efforts to coordinate and align with national priorities and support a broader aid effectiveness agenda. UN Women's coordination mandate applies to its coordination of actors both within the UN system and with various actors in the country – national partners, civil society organizations, and donors. In each country UN Women has determined what relationships to strengthen within the UN system and among external players to achieve results in the most efficient and effective ways. This multi-stakeholder approach is evident in most countries, regardless of type of presence.

Donors, government counterparts, and civil society organizations interviewed for the case studies value UN Women's coordination and convening of different stakeholder groups in the country on GEEW issues and also expect UN Women to fill that role (Kosovo, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey).

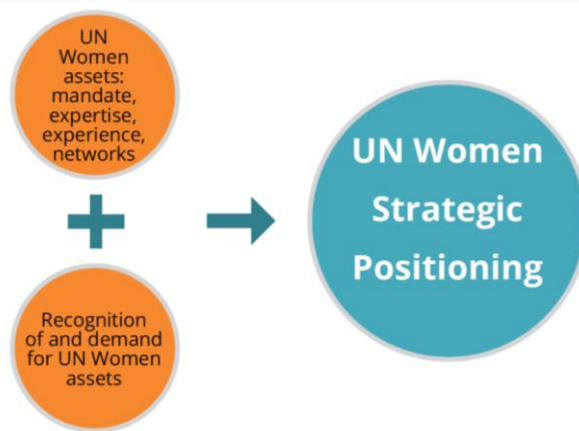
In Albania, civil society actors wish to see UN Women play an even greater convening role to improve donor coordination in development assistance as it pertains to gender equality.⁷³

Few external stakeholders who were interviewed were aware that UN Women’s coordination mandate on GEEW also includes coordination within the UN system. Donors and other international partners in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey expressed a need for UN Women to play a stronger coordinating role in order to achieve greater coherence among the donor community in general and in resource mobilization efforts across UN agencies. Better coordination is also desired in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) where UN entities are competing with one another and with government counterparts for a dwindling pool of donor funds. In Kosovo, the donor community has a greater interest in leveraging the UN Women relationship with civil society organizations.

From the perspective of UN Women, the availability of resources has a strong influence on how it prioritizes which relationships to cultivate under its coordination mandate. As further noted in the section on Organizational Efficiency, the resourcing issue affects UN Women offices with DoA and programme presence offices. UN Women Albania, with DoA, has intentionally prioritized coordination with external stakeholders⁷⁴ but feels limited by lack of funding for its UN system coordination mandate and its comparatively limited influence on the UN system. UN Women Kosovo, a programme presence office, also noted that it has unstable and limited funding but the case study on Kosovo also illustrates how UN Women has used its comparative advantage of having a solid network of national and CSO partners in order to build its reputation within the UNKT.

Finding 2: UN Women’s strategic positioning for UN system coordination has been affected by how it has navigated the stakes of UN entities in operational work in GEEW in different thematic areas; by other UN entities’ perceptions of the importance of its power, authority, and resources; and contextual factors such as EU accession and changes in donor priorities.

In examining the strategic positioning of UN Women to enhance UN system coordination, one factor that emerged strongly in the evaluation data was how UN Women, as a nascent institution in the UN system, has managed to navigate the terrain in countries where other UN entities have had a foothold and firmly established role in leading on GEEW and/or in specific thematic areas such as EVAW or Women’s Economic Empowerment. UN Women has established its niche and been able to play its coordination role more effectively by adopting approaches that are grounded in an understanding of the comparative strengths and niches of other actors, weighed against its own organizational assets and capacities. UN Women’s own assets and capacities include: its GEEW mandate and expertise and the networks and relationships that it has (often building on those of its predecessor, UNIFEM). These give it credibility as a convening entity more generally (as noted in Finding 1).



⁷³ There was not sufficient data collected on donor perspectives during the visit to Albania, owing to scheduling issues.

⁷⁴ In particular, UN Women Albania is seeking to influence the European Union to adopt and apply the gender equality standards for countries like Albania that are pre-accession.

The challenges for UN Women strategic positioning have been related to UN system entities' understanding of roles and responsibilities for GEEW, the level of resources that UN Women brings to the table, and the type of presence that UN Women has in a country.

In countries where UN Women has a programme presence, its approaches have been more varied than in DoA countries and more adapted to the specific context. In Serbia, for example, UN Women made its entry into the UN institutional environment by conducting a mapping exercise. It took as its point of departure the importance of establishing a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities in order to build a trustworthy relationship with partners.

In Kosovo, UN Women was able to build on its comparative advantages: its unique GEEW-focused mandate and demonstrated GEEW technical expertise, as well as foundational working relationships and the reputation of its predecessor entity (UNIFEM) (see sidebar). In doing so, UN Women has become a relevant partner to other UN entities, has placed a high premium on its relationship with the UN Development Coordinator, and has managed to acquire a seat on the UNKT. (See sidebar)

UN Women Kosovo and the Security Gender Group (SGG)

UN Women Kosovo has, since UNIFEM's presence, historically positioned itself as a convener on women, peace and security (WPS), conducting much of its coordination work through the Security and Gender Group (SGG). This forum, led by UN Women, has engaged a host of UN and non-UN actors in the country. All external respondents in Kosovo were highly positive about its engagement in UNSCR 1325 and it is perceived as having been strategic in its efforts to preserve a collaborative culture by maintaining strong ties with the cluster of UN entities (UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNFPA and UNDCO) that have had more prominent roles in the work on WPS. Some external stakeholders also see UN Women Kosovo as having an explicit coordination strategy that promotes local ownership through its partnerships with civil society organizations and women's organizations. Nevertheless, while UN entities value UN Women for its convener role, they do not see UN Women as having a clear gender mainstreaming strategy within the UNCT. From UN Women's perspective, the entity is aware of the importance of influencing other actors within the UN System and has purposefully worked on strengthening its relationship with the UN Development Coordinator (UNDC).

In Turkey, UN Women took a different approach and placed a Gender Specialist in the RC Office in Istanbul. The Gender Specialist reports to both the UNRC and UN Women Regional Director. The Regional Director is also the Representative to Turkey and represents UN Women on the UNCT in Turkey. However, when the Regional Director is not available to attend UNCT meetings, the Gender Specialist is not allowed to represent Turkey on the UNCT. Having the Gender Specialist in the RC Office has not strengthened UN Women's positioning in the country, as, she is not seen as a staff member of UN Women and UN Women's contributions to UN system coordination through this approach are not recognized.⁷⁵

In countries where UN Women has delegation of authority (DoA), its approaches and challenges have been fairly similar across countries. The complexity of navigating the terrain and mitigating the risk of competing for resources appears to be more prominent. In these countries, UN Women must establish a complementarity of roles in an environment where other UN entities, such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, previously filled leadership roles in GEEW and in thematic areas such as gender-based violence (GBV). In a few countries in the region, UNDP pre-dated UN Women and had a large portfolio on gender equality and GBV. The challenge of having clear lines that acknowledge and take advantage of the comparative strengths of the two agencies continues to

⁷⁵ UN stakeholders interviewed have a hard time recognizing that an entity with an operational role can also be a coordinating entity. Their experience with the Gender Specialist in the RC Office has been positive and they see that as more favourable for UN coordination.

surface in operational activities. In two DoA countries, the data strongly suggest that UN Women encountered territorial attitudes on the part of other UN agencies, with a clear message that its coordination mandate should respect and recognize the expertise that resides in other UN entities. The larger UN entities in particular show a desire for UN Women to lead on the normative aspects of GEEW and are far more cautious about UN Women's lead role in programming with its risks of competing for the same funding. In many countries, UN Women has addressed these types of challenges by contributing to UNCT joint annual work plans, based on comparative advantages, and in BiH by continuing to seek complementarities with other UN entities around substantive issues over time.

The perceptions of other UN entities on the importance of power, authority, and resources affect UN Women strategic positioning for UN system coordination in both DoA countries and programme presence countries, but there are greater implications in DoA countries because of the competition for funding.

The importance of agency size was also a factor in most countries. The perception of several UN entities consulted is that an entity with a larger budget and more resources commands greater influence and could potentially share its resources rather than compete for limited donor funds. The recent (M) Country Programme Evaluation in the Kazakhstan MCO concluded that in Tajikistan UN Women was best placed to undertake its coordination mandate with similarly sized UN entities because the collaborative work and day-to-day relations proved most successful in these cases (UN Women with IOM or UNAIDS).⁷⁶ When it comes to larger and better resourced entities such as UNDP, UN Women is more likely to experience areas of overlap in programming, which presents a challenge to its partnership as has been the case in Kazakhstan. The fact that UN Women is expected to appeal to other UN entities with a show of resources is a clear demonstration that institutional incentives to reinforce single-agency reputations still prevail in the UN system and run counter to the Delivering as One philosophy.

In two countries in the region (one DoA and one programme presence), UN entities assess UN Women's credibility by its level of authority, namely, the highest-ranking position it brings to the UNCT table. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia, it strongly emerged that having the support and respect of the Resident Coordinator boosted UN Women's chances of being integrated more easily into the UNCT family.

Contextual factors that affect UN Women's strategic positioning

Contextual factors also have a bearing on the availability of funding for UN Women and this has in turn affected its strategic positioning for implementing its UN system coordination mandate. Some of these factors are inextricably linked to a complex political and economic context that is influencing both the country and regional level, such as EU accession, changing economic country status (increase of middle-income countries in the region linked to less funding from international donors) and post-conflict economies, and security and peacebuilding efforts (see section 3.3.7 on external factors affecting UN Women's effectiveness).

The situation in BiH is a good illustration. Since UN Women established a Country Office in September 2014, bilateral donors, including important Nordic donors, have been scaling down funding. With the dwindling presence of bilateral donors, the EU is increasingly the most important potential donor. However, to qualify for EU IPA 2 funds for 2014-2017, the country must invest

⁷⁶ Barnes, Joseph. "UN Women Multi-Country Portfolio Evaluation of Kazakhstan Multi-Country Office for Central Asia Strategic Note 2014 - 2015. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Final Report," October 25, 2015.

significant resources to prepare a submission and re-align its political priorities to meet the requirements of EU integration.⁷⁷ The UN is seeking to support the integration of BiH into the EU, but the funding environment presents a particular challenge.

In interviews with stakeholders in Albania, Kosovo, Georgia, and Serbia, GEEW specifically was discussed as a priority human rights issue. UN Women Albania has positioned itself strategically to influence the EU and has designed a project, the Gender Equality Facility (GEF), to support the government's compliance with the EU gender equality standards or 'GE Acquis.' This is the centerpiece of their strategic positioning, but because EU funds cannot be shared amongst UN entities, it is a single-agency approach, not a UN system coordinated approach.

Swedish SIDA remains a strong supporter of GEEW and has funded Gender Specialist positions in Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey. While SIDA's support is extremely valuable to UN Women in these programme presence countries, it also means that key positions are dependent on donor resources and therefore do not have a secure funding base.

Finding 3: UN Women's coordination mandate is not well understood by other UN entities, which leads to unrealistic expectations with regards to UN Women's role in supporting UN system capacity for gender mainstreaming.

How other UN entities understand and appreciate UN Women's coordination mandate in general (e.g., what it entails and how it can be utilized strategically to support their own work as well as strengthen the work of the UN as a whole in advancing GEEW in the country) is fundamental to UN Women's success in delivering its mandate. Interviews suggest that this mandate is not well understood by others. In addition, despite the small sample (n=15) responding to this question in the survey of UN Women staff for this evaluation, 33 per cent of respondents were disinclined to agree that "UN Women's coordination mandate is well understood by UN partners at the country level."

- In Kosovo, which is a programme presence country, UN Women has built a reputation as a convenor and lead of the Security and Gender Group and for its involvement in joint programming (see below) and that is how its coordination role is understood.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women's overall approach to its coordination role is not well understood by UN stakeholders consulted. It has had a recent change in leadership and has also struggled to strike a balance between the different elements of its organizational mandate. It is seen by other UN entities as focusing primarily on programming, while there is an expectation for it to play a stronger role in system-wide coordination efforts within the UNCT.⁷⁸ The changing context and the history of UN Women's presence (dating back to UNIFEM) and of other UN entities in the country affect how UN Women's coordination role is understood.
- In Georgia, extra efforts were required to explain the UN Women coordination function to the UNCT and a recent audit noted the need for UN Women HQ to provide additional guidance to the CO on implementation of its UN system coordination mandate.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Bosnia is preparing to make a formal request for admission into the EU. See: <http://www.dw.com/en/who-is-where-on-the-path-to-eu-membership/a-16748597>

⁷⁸ Many of the UN stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan reminisce about the previous model for supporting coordination on GEEW, which was through UNIFEM (and then UN Women) funding of a Gender Advisor in the RCO

⁷⁹ UNDP, Office of Audit and Investigations. "Audit of UN Women Country Office in Georgia," September 29, 2015.

As these examples suggest, clear understanding of UN Women's coordination mandate on the part of the UN entities is in part a function of how effective and clear UN Women is in communicating its mandate. Staff in some UN Women offices noted that they lacked guidance from the Regional Office or Headquarters on how to manage the various components of the complex mandate, in particular on how to translate the UN system coordination mandate into a feasible country-specific strategy.

UN entities also have unrealistic expectations about UN Women's coordination role, and support for gender mainstreaming, which derive from their own limited capacity for GEEW.

As noted in UN Women's founding documents and reaffirmed through QCPR and UN-SWAP, the establishment of UN Women does not relieve other UN entities of their responsibility for promoting GEEW and addressing the needs of women and girls. The data across countries (regardless of type of UN Women presence) suggests that there is limited commitment and capacity across UN agencies in GEEW. In some countries, UN agencies with weaker GEEW capacity are increasing demands for UN Women to provide technical and financial support to them or to the UNCT overall. The Kosovo Scorecard results show that in-house capacity for GEEW in several UN entities is declining. With the downsizing of UN presence in Kosovo, UNDP has removed its gender expert position and other agencies have appointed gender focal points in lieu of gender experts. The risk is the expectation that UN Women will do the gender mainstreaming on behalf of the UNCT.

In other countries, a similar trend is observed of UN agencies not living up to the notion of shared accountability for GEEW commitments and expecting a lot more in terms of capacity development and mainstreaming support from UN Women. Even in Albania, where GTG members are fairly senior people with strong gender expertise, not all of the smaller agencies have designated GFPs. In Kyrgyzstan, the challenge was articulated as follows:

Gender capacity of GTG members is limited. Although the [UN Women] CO is committed to coordinate capacity development of UNCTs and non-UN partners on gender, there is a lack of internal capacity to provide gender knowledge in different thematic areas, especially in the area of transformative gender changes.⁸⁰

The same phenomenon can be seen in UN Women programme presence countries supervised by the MCO in Kazakhstan. According to the recent (M) Country Programme Evaluation, most UN entities in the sub-region are small and do not have specialized gender experts.⁸¹ Consequently, their gender focal points tend to be individuals with an interest in gender and the GTGs are not staffed with the appropriate level of technical expertise. The (M) Country Programme Evaluation argues for a need to better articulate the case for [other entities] committing senior staff resources, including learning opportunities, to GEEW.

3.2.3 Relevance at Regional Level

Finding 4: The UN Women ECA Regional Office is well positioned and has been a convener/co-convener for several initiatives to improve coordination with other UN regional entities. There is a shared recognition that regional coordination should be strengthened and that UN Women has a key role to play. The relevance of these roles to countries is still not clear.

⁸⁰ ECA Regional Office, ECA GTG Qs Consolidated Response 2015, Quarter One.

⁸¹ Barnes, Joseph. "UN Women Multi-Country Portfolio Evaluation of Kazakhstan Multi-Country Office for Central Asia Strategic Note 2014 - 2015. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Final Report," October 25, 2015, p. 43.

As noted in section 2.4 on UN system context in ECA, there are several inherent challenges to coordination at the regional level, including the existence of different hubs for UN system (Istanbul, Geneva) and the overlap between different coordinating mechanisms (R-UNDG and RCM). The Regional UNDG and the RCM have taken recent steps that favour greater cooperation across among the two groups (such as organizing back-to-back meetings of R-UNDG and RCM).

In this favourable environment, the UN Women ECA Regional Office (RO) has taken measures to improve coordination on GEEW at the regional level. Its approach has been characterized by:

- Establishing a regional partnership framework between the three UN entities based in Istanbul (UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women) that sets the parameters for operational cooperation among the entities.
- Building the coordination environment and trust among stakeholders through several joint initiatives, such as:
 - Training of Trainers in November 2015, conducted under the aegis of the Regional Strategic Partnership Framework on Gender in Europe and Central Asia among UN Women, UNFPA, and UNDP Regional Offices
 - The Global Conference on Eliminating Violence Against Women (EVAW) in Istanbul, co-organized by UN Women and UNFPA Regional Offices in December 2015.
- Developing operational mechanisms to facilitate cooperation, such as establishing the ECA-Regional Working Group on Gender (RWGG) consisting of UN agencies and related entities working at regional level on GEEW.⁸² Importantly, this group is responding to demands emerging both from the R-UNDG and RCM and fills an important gap in the overall architecture as there was no gender task force/working group in place before.
- Playing a prominent and supportive role to UNCT as a member of the Peer Support Group (PSG) since July 2014, particularly during a period when there was a need to strengthen the integration of gender equality in 11 UNDAF rollout countries plus Kosovo in 2014-2015.⁸³
- Taking on leadership roles to strengthen the overall architecture for coordination in the R-UNDG, such as co-chairing the Programme Advisory Group (PAG)⁸⁴.

This approach has been both relevant and realistic given the stage of development of both the overall architecture for coordination in ECA region (with several changes introduced by the R-UNDG in the past two years) and the stage of evolution of the UN Women ECA RO, which has simultaneously established its operating capacity, shaped its oversight and technical support role vis-à-vis Country Offices (especially those with only programme presence), and defined/structured its coordination role in regional bodies.

The UN Women ECA Regional Office is now well positioned with regard to R-UNDG in particular and, according to stakeholders, can do more to foster collaboration across entities. Now that the RO is fully established and the coordinating mechanisms are in place, UN Women may be able to put more emphasis on strategic and issue-based coordination. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for that, and the PAG provides one of the formal mechanisms for such

⁸² UN Development Group. "Terms of Reference (Draft): Europe and Central Asia Regional Working Group on Gender," December 2015.

⁸³ R-UNDG, 2013-2014 Biennium Final Results and Impact Report for Regional UNDG Teams.

⁸⁴ The PAG has not been endorsed by Regional Directors as its TORs are still under discussion. Recent developments that occurred after the field visits indicate an alternative option to create "issue-based coalitions" under the R-UNDG is now on the table.

discussions. UN Women can do more to bring agencies together to collaborate on specific, substantive issues for the region (e.g., how to ensure that agencies are working on migration in a way that is not gender blind). According to interviews, there is still unilateral action in areas where there is room for cooperation. As one stakeholder put it, *“we would like stronger approach to coordination from UN Women, which is both inclusive and proactive.”* Interviews and survey responses (although limited in number) provided ideas for the type of initiatives that UN Women could undertake in the future to play a more strategic coordinating role at the regional level. These ideas are captured in the recommendations to the RO (see section 5.2).

The relevance of regional-level coordination to countries is still not clear. UN Women staff in countries do not perceive the immediate benefits of these regional level initiatives, in part because they are recent and not well understood. The Peer Support Group is the most relevant and visible mechanism in countries due to the role that this group plays in the context of UNDAFs. The RWGG is very new and its contributions at the level of country GTG have not yet been felt. In addition, only 40% of respondents to survey about GTGs (N=61) indicated that they received sufficient support from the R-UNDG. GTGs in countries look to region for technical expertise and assistance (for certain issues in response to demands from governments), capacity building, practical programmatic guidance, links to regional and global GE agenda, good practices from other countries

There are cases when agreements that are clear at regional level may be misconstrued by entities at country level. For example, the regional partnership framework between UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women specifies that UNFPA is the lead agency for certain activities in EAW at regional level; yet in one country visited by the evaluation team, one consulted UN entity interpreted this as meaning that UNFPA was the lead in EAW and UN Women would not work in that area. However, according to the agreement, UNFPA is the lead and UN Women plays a supporting role.

The strategic positioning of the ECA RO vis-à-vis its technical support role to countries on coordination has been weakened by limited assets and capacities at the RO, as the RO is still defining the scope of its role in support of countries for UN system coordination in a context of limited human and financial resources. As noted above, UN Women staff indicate that they do not receive sufficient support from the RO and from HQ in order to carry out the UN system coordination mandate. Country offices consulted perceive that the RO tends to ask for information from country offices (to meet growing reporting requirements from HQ), but cannot offer enough of the right kind of guidance for their work. The RO role in this area has been limited by the current level of human and financial resources allocated to providing country support on UN Women’s UN system coordination role. In addition, UN Women offices in ECA countries look to the RO to help fill gaps in substantive expertise that they do not have, yet the RO has also lacked capacity in these areas. This is further discussed in Finding 18 in Organizational Efficiency.

3.3 Effectiveness of Coordination Work in ECA

3.3.1 Introduction

This section examines the effectiveness of UN Women’s coordination work in terms of:

- The contributions of UN Women’s approaches to UN System coordination to results in GEEW in ECA countries and at the regional level;
- The value added of UN Women’s UN system coordination to normative and operational activities of the UN system;
- Progress in building coherence around GEEW within the UNCT, supported by the GTG;

- Contributions of such coordination to mainstreaming gender into UNDAF planning documents and processes, to joint programming initiatives, and to building capacity of UN agencies in GEEW; and
- External factors that have enabled or limited interagency coordination and UN Women’s approach for engaging with other UN entities at regional and national levels.

3.3.2 Contributions to GEEW results

Finding 5: While there are some examples of UN Women’s coordination efforts having contributed to progress towards GEEW at the country level, there is insufficient data to make a consistent link between UN Women’s coordination work and substantial changes on the ground.

UN Women’s Theory of Change for UN System-wide Coordination for GEEW indicates that *“coordination is a means, not an end. It must advance concrete development results that change the options and opportunities for men, women, communities and countries.”*⁸⁵ Coordination is one of several means – along with normative and operational work – for achieving the six areas of development results outlined in UN Women’s Strategic Plan.⁸⁶ However, as noted in section 3.2 (relevance) and section 3.5 (organizational efficiency), limited strategic guidance within UN Women provides little information on how coordination efforts are intended to contribute to the achievement of development results in these impact areas.

There is not a lot of evidence to date of UN Women’s contributions to progress on GEEW results through its coordination mandate in countries in the ECA region (both programme presence and DoA offices). Annual reporting on coordination results for 2014 mostly provides examples of gender mainstreaming in the UN system planning processes – for UNDAFs and joint programming – which are discussed in section 3.3.6.⁸⁷ Clear cut examples mostly pertain to contributions to the joint normative GEEW work, as shown in the table below of the most exemplary results drawn from reports of both COs and programme presence offices. Volume II, Appendix IX provides details on contributions from UN Women’s coordination.

Table 3:1 Examples of Results of UN Women’s Coordination Mandate on GEEW in ECA Countries

Country	Action Reported for 2014	Result
Georgia	<p>UN Women coordinated and led the development of UNCT Georgia confidential CEDAW report submission.</p> <p>It also presented the key conclusions and recommendations from the report to the CEDAW members on 6 July 2014 at a closed session.</p> <p>UN Women has also communicated the results of the CEDAW hearing of Georgia State Party’s report with UNCT colleagues and civil society organizations.</p>	<p>All the major points flagged in the UNCT report have been reflected in the Committee’s conversation with the State Party and in the CEDAW concluding comments and observations.</p>

⁸⁵ UN Women’s Theory of Change (May 2015), p. 2.

⁸⁶ The six impact areas of UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 are as follows: 1) Women Leadership and participation in decision making; 2) Women economic empowerment; 3) Eliminating violence against women and girls; 4) Peace and security and humanitarian action; 5) Governance and national planning; 6) Global norms, policies and standards.

⁸⁷ UN Women, RMS Search Result for Reporting Year 2014, 20 March 2015.

Country	Action Reported for 2014	Result
Kyrgyzstan	<p>UN Women, together with UNDP, developed amendments to the law on legal and social protection from domestic violence (2003), in discussion with stakeholders coordinated by the national gender mechanism.</p> <p>Given the lack of state funding for a response to EVAW, a project proposal on “Addressing domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan through a coordinated response of the state and civil society” was developed by the Ministry of Social Development and several CSOs with UN GTG technical support and submitted to UN Trust Fund on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls.</p>	<p>In November 2014, a grant agreement with the Ministry was signed. The proposal is the first comprehensive attempt of the state to provide systemic response to gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence. The proposed intervention aims to (i) lay the basis for sustainable state provision of comprehensive quality services for survivors of violence based on the principles of human rights and women empowerment, (ii) empower community members – women and men – to combat domestic violence, (iii) promote a national dialogue on domestic violence involving state and non-state actors and the public. (ECA 2014 Annual Report for Kyrgyzstan)</p>
Kosovo	<p>UN Women has provided extensive support for the coordination of activities and advocacy of the Security and Gender Group which has had a substantive focus on conflict-related sexual violence.</p>	<p>The legal recognition of the status of civilian victims for survivors of conflict related sexual violence was achieved in 2014</p>
Macedonia	<p>Together with UNDP, UN Women provided technical support to the government on domestic violence legislation.</p>	<p>According to the UN Women Macedonia, 2014 Annual Report: “New Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection of Domestic Violence was adopted and to certain extent is aligned with Council of Europe Convention for Combating and Preventing Violence against Women including Domestic Violence. The Law introduces important novelties: (i) it recognizes economic violence and stalking as forms of domestic violence, (ii) it introduces the principle of due diligence of the state, and (iii) it foresees the adoption of integrated policies and establishment of permanent national coordination body for the implementation of the law.</p> <p>One of the significant advantages of the new law is that it reinforces the existing protection measures, requires the assessment of risk and development of safety plan for the survivor and includes, for the first</p>

Country	Action Reported for 2014	Result
Serbia	UN Women mobilized the UNCT to joint action to hold the government accountable to its CEDAW commitments. After the Serbian government abolished the Gender Equality Directorate in the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Social and veteran Affairs in 2014 and replaced it with a weaker mechanism, UN Women mobilized the UNCT through the Resident Coordinator and through the GTG, to send a letter to the Minister of Labor and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urging them to respect their commitments.	time, a specific measure for removal of the perpetrator from the joint household.” The government agreed later in 2014 to establish a stronger mechanism – the Coordinating Body on Gender Equality – that would be headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure.
Tajikistan	Through the GTG UN Women, in close partnership with SDC and UNFPA, conducted a national round-table on the nexus between the CEDAW National Action Plan (NAP) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) NAP.	The outcomes of the wide consultative process were used to improve coordination between the implementation processes of several action plans on UN human rights instruments, which in addition to CEDAW and UPR also include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Government also approved the State Programme on Prevention of Violence in the Family for 2014-2023.
Uzbekistan	UN Women, with the UNCT, made specific recommendations to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) National Action Plan to address critical issues on gender equality and women’s human rights.	The development and adoption in November 2014 of the UPR NAP (2014-2016) incorporated a number of substantive recommendations made by the UN, such as measures to combat domestic violence, temporary special measures, improvement of data collection and a monitoring system on gender equality and the human rights of women. In the UPR NAP, approved by the Interagency Council on Coordination of the Work of State Bodies on Legal Advocacy and Education under the Ministry of Justice, 26 of the 92 paragraphs

Country	Action Reported for 2014	Result
		relate to implementation of the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations (2010), including development, implementation and monitoring of the state programmes on improving the status of women; recommendations on implementation of temporary special measures; reforming national legislation and setting a minimum age of marriage for girls and boys at 18 years; and revision and adoption of the Law on Gender Equality.

In both programme presence and DoA countries, normative work carried out under UN Women's coordination mandate has led to progress on the part of the state to enter into dialogue on recommendations or to adopt legislative or institutional measures to enact GEEW recommendations that are grounded in normative frameworks.

In UN Women reports on normative work, it is not always evident whether GEEW results were due to coordination of UN entities. For example, reports suggest that much of the work that UN Women leads on building national capacity to adopt gender-responsive budgeting has made impressive strides in many countries,⁸⁸ but the participation of other UN entities is not evident. Similarly, UN Women Albania has helped to advance women in leadership and political decision making positions, but the results are not described in relation to a coordinated approach.

Most UN Women annual country reports do not refer explicitly to the use of coordinated approaches to achieve development results articulated in the Development Results Framework (DRFs) and in their Strategic Notes. Details are provided in Volume II, Appendix X and XI. Further, neither UN Women nor other UN entities have systematically tracked the effects of their coordination work on development results; this makes it difficult to systematically link UN coordination initiatives with progress towards equality.

3.3.3 Value added to normative work on GEEW

Finding 6: The value added of UN Women's UN system coordination role to the normative work of the UN system on GEEW is clearly evident. Working with groups of entities, and more broadly with UNCTs and GTGs, UN Women has coordinated or led various successful joint efforts to influence policy and joint advocacy initiatives and campaigns to promote normative frameworks.

Joint UN efforts to influence policy

Much of the joint work on policy and policy influencing focuses on normative frameworks. Joint work to influence policy is visible across all presence models.

⁸⁸ Mention is made of such progress in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine, however it should be noted that Albania, BiH, Macedonia and Moldova participated in a UN Women Regional GRB Project.

- In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women coordinated GTG inputs and support for various processes relevant to normative frameworks for GEEW, e.g. the NAP on GEEW, the NAP on SCR 1325, and the Beijing +20 review. The GTG, under UN Women leadership, was also highly implicated in coordination of activities to promote UNSCR 1325 activities, particularly in supporting national partners in the realization and monitoring of its implementation.⁸⁹ The former UN Women Country Representative was widely noted to have facilitated the decision for Kyrgyzstan to become a pilot country for the SG's 7-Point Action Plan due to her promotion of the action plan as an opportunity to establish gender responsiveness as a priority of UN peacebuilding and restoration efforts in support of the Kyrgyz government.
- UN Women Georgia has focused its attention on the implementation of UN 1325 (peace and security), for which a coordination group exists under the Prime Minister's Office.⁹⁰ Joint efforts led by UN Women have had good results in Georgia, including: strong commitments of political leaders on GEEW and ending VAW; mandatory quotas for women's political participation in elections; and gender equality and domestic violence national plans, amongst others. Other evidence shows that UN Women Georgia has brought attention to GEEW issues through consistent pressure and dialogue with other stakeholders and that this has engaged the UNCT in addressing these issues.

A further area of joint action is the submission of reports on CEDAW – a primary normative pillar for women's rights.⁹¹ The types of contributions made through UN system coordination include: UN development of confidential reports to CEDAW committee, UN collaboration to strengthen capacity of governments to produce CEDAW reports, and joint efforts among entities to support government plans to follow up on CEDAW Committee concluding observations. These efforts are evident in countries in which UN Women has DoA and in programme presence countries.⁹²

- In 2014, UN Women in Kyrgyzstan convened UNCT members during the development of the confidential UNCT report to the CEDAW committee, and later engaged the support of the GTG during the peer-review process. It was the first time that this report highlighted intersectional forms of gender discrimination, and focused on issues affecting elderly women and women from ethnic minorities. In collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Women also supported the government to develop a road map to enact priorities of the official CEDAW Report and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations.
- UN Women in Albania rallied UN agencies in support of the government's submission of the 4th CEDAW Progress Report and also led on the Shadow Report, consolidating inputs from civil society, the international community, and the UNCT.

Similar efforts have been reported for the following programme presence countries as well:

⁸⁹ RMS Annual Reporting, Kyrgyzstan 1/30/2015

⁹⁰ The 1325 Coordination Group in Georgia was managed by the Vice Chairman of the Parliament until this year, when it shifted to the Prime Minister's Office.

⁹¹ Evidence of this can also be found for Moldova, Macedonia, Tajikistan (under the GTG), Ukraine (under the GTG). All countries in ECA have ratified CEDAW, including its Optional Protocol (OP), with the exception of Uzbekistan which has not ratified the OP.

⁹² According to UN Women Regional Office, *GTG in Europe and Central Asia, Summary of Questionnaire Responses, 1st Quarter, 2015*, p. 1, even in countries where UN Women is a non-resident agency, such as Armenia, the CEDAW and UPR reports were also being accomplished jointly by other UN agencies, namely UNFPA and OHCHR. This information is reported by GTGs but the reporting does not indicate whether UN Women Regional Office made any contribution in this process.

- For the first time, in 2014, the UNCT in Serbia produced a confidential report to CEDAW, under the guidance of the GTG. UN entities were well served by UN Women’s leadership and convening role and gathering inputs from the UNCT for the submission. The confidential reports to CEDAW are also an important vehicle for representing the views of CSOs whose voices are not always well received by government.
- The UN Women MCO in Kazakhstan led the sub-regional consultation for review of the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action in Central Asia, October 2014.
- Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkey also report joint action for CEDAW reporting.
 - In Tajikistan, UN Women, through the GTG, conducted a national round-table on the nexus between CEDAW National Action Plan (NAP) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) NAP which helped improve coordination between the implementation of these action plans, as well as several others (CRC, ICRMW, ICESCR).
 - In Uzbekistan, UN Women, through the UNCT, supported the development of follow-up recommendations for the second UPR. In addition, the UPR NAP incorporated a number of key recommendations made by the UN, including specific measures to address domestic violence and temporary special measures and improvements to data collection and monitoring system for gender equality and human rights.
 - In Turkey, in 2015, the GTG led by UN Women also coordinated the drafting of a confidential report to CEDAW.

Other normative work relates to promotion of the Istanbul Convention,⁹³ the legally binding Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Eight of the 18 ECA countries have signed it⁹⁴ and five have ratified it.⁹⁵ In Georgia, UN Women and UNICEF provided technical support to the development of a package of legislative amendments aiming at harmonizing legislation with the Convention. In Turkey, UN Women held a two-day gender mainstreaming training for UN staff that extensively discussed normative frameworks, including CEDAW, the Beijing Platform and the Istanbul Protocol.

Joint advocacy efforts and campaigns

Delivering as One Countries in ECA Region

Among the countries that piloted the Delivering as One (DaO) approach beginning in 2006, Albania was the only ECA country. Other countries in the region that have volunteered as DaO are BiH, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, amongst the case study/consultation countries; and others in the region are Armenia, Moldova, and Montenegro. Georgia has been exploring the prospect of becoming DaO and has made initial efforts to join up UNCT efforts on Communications.

Countries operating in a DaO framework all have joint programmes that include UN Women, with the exception of Montenegro which does not have a UN Women presence. Guidance exists for joint programmes under the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for

⁹³ See: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures>

⁹⁴ These are Albania, BiH, Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

⁹⁵ Albania, BiH, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

There is a preponderance of evidence for UN Women’s leadership in campaigns for Beijing +20, UNCSR 1325 on women, peace and security, 16 Days of Activism against violence against women, and also for the global UN Women campaign and HeforShe (launched in 2014) to encourage men and boys’ engagement in GEEW.

Joint advocacy is often done in the framework of the GTG. Some information on joint advocacy activities by country is available in the report on the 2015 ECA Regional Office questionnaire to ECA Gender Theme Groups that asked about “joint communication and advocacy on GEEW” for the first quarter of 2015.⁹⁷ However, the information was not consistent in reporting which agencies participated in these events and which led the event.

In Albania, which is a Delivering as One country (see sidebar), for example, the UNCT work plan for 2015 shows the campaign on Beijing +20 being led by UNCT and the GTG; the HeforShe campaign led by the RC and UNFPA; International Women’s Day and 16 Days of Activism led by UNCT; and UNCT participation in the post-2015 development agenda. Reporting on advocacy activities is generally activity-based rather than an articulation of their results.

In DaO countries, joint communications are part of the Communicating as One approach.⁹⁸ UN entities are expected to “advocate with a common voice” and one of the indicators is the number of campaigns jointly undertaken. As an example, Kyrgyzstan, which is a self-nominated DaO country, has a UN Communications and Advocacy Group. The GTG coordinated the implementation of several major media and advocacy campaigns in 2014 as part of the Communicating as One approach. And as part of its 2015 OEFF work plan, UN Women

the DaO approach.⁹⁶ The SOPs recommend the establishment of One Funds or equivalent pooled funding mechanisms that can facilitate joint programming.

Albania has gone the furthest in implementing the SOPs. It established a One (Coherence) Fund overseen by a Joint Executive Committee that allocates available resources to the Programme of Cooperation using performance-based criteria and in response to Output Working Group requests. UN Women in Albania considers its experience with the DaO as positive, as the arrangements for joint programmes ensure inclusion of specialized issues such as GEEW.

UN Women participation in other inter-agency groups

While UN Women also participates in other inter-agency thematic groups, such as youth, monitoring and evaluation, HIV/AIDS, to ensure gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, information on UN Women’s gender mainstreaming efforts in these groups and their effects is not evident in the data or the documentation reviewed. One positive example is the UN Joint Team on HIV/AIDS in Georgia. The Team provides technical support for updating the National Strategic Plan on HIV, and its engagement with government led to a joint initiative to support the government’s broader efforts with pooled funds from UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women. For more information about the thematic groups in which UN Women participated, see Volume II, Appendix XII.

⁹⁶ UNDG. “Guidance Note on Joint Programmes,” Standard Operating Procedures for Countries Adopting the “Delivering as One” Approach. August 2014. Under the SOP, a joint programme is contextually defined as “a set of activities contained in a joint work plan and related common budgetary framework, involving two or more UN organizations and (sub-) national governmental partners, intended to achieve results aligned with national priorities as reflected in UNDAF/One Programme or an equivalent programming instrument or development framework.” (p. 3).

⁹⁷ UN Women Regional Office. “Gender Theme Group (GTG) in Europe and Central Asia: Summary of Questionnaire Responses, 1st Quarter of 2015.” April, 2015. Responses were not obtained from Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.

⁹⁸ In the region (n=18), one country, Albania is a designated pilot for DaO and four others are officially DaO countries: BiH, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Montenegro.

expects to further promote the GEEW agenda in the One Communications activities.

Turkey is a UN Women programme presence country managed by the Regional Office. Members of its GTG concede that joint advocacy is challenging because the more UN agencies involved, the more processes become bureaucratic, especially for high visibility events.⁹⁹ Despite such challenges, UN Women has led several advocacy campaigns through the GTG. In 2015, it led for the first time in Turkey a very visible UNiTE Campaign and facilitated cooperation between UN Women UNICEF and UNFPA and the Aydın Doğan Foundation on the Day of the Girl Child. In Kazakhstan, a programme presence country, the GTG has also noted the weak capacity of the UN Communications Group for joint communication on gender advocacy. Countries with no UN Women presence also organize campaign activities and face similar challenges. For example, based on information gathered from GTGs through the UN Women RO, in Azerbaijan, which is a non-DaO country with no UN Women presence, the GTG also reports challenges in conducting joint advocacy and communication activities. UN entities continue to prefer to conduct activities in isolation, creating a dispersed effect, more limited impact, and a distilled focus on gender. However, the GTG also concedes that limited financial resources affect the scope of joint communication and advocacy on gender.¹⁰⁰ Notwithstanding the lack of systematic data, evidence suggests that joint advocacy and communication may be more difficult in non-DaO countries.

3.3.4 Value added to operational work of the UN

Finding 7: Regardless of its type of presence, UN Women’s value added to operational activities of the UN has been constrained by limitations in the implementation of joint programmes. UN entities participating in joint programmes in the ECA region have not demonstrated a strong sense of partnership or joint vision throughout implementation and, even under the most favourable conditions, institutional power dynamics determine the degree of partnership.

The UNDAF provides an overarching framework for the country programming of UN entities. Beyond the UNDAF, the most common coordinating mechanism for the UN’s operational work is joint programmes. As shown in the table below, most ECA countries for which data are available are engaged in some form of joint programme. Nine countries have had joint programmes with a main focus on GEEW (i.e., a programme with an explicit objective of empowering women and/or promoting gender equality). Six countries had joint programmes (JP) where UN Women was a participating entity and whose main focus was *not* GEEW, suggesting gender integration as a cross-cutting issue.

⁹⁹ UN Women Regional Office, *GTG in Europe and Central Asia, Summary of Questionnaire Responses, 1st Quarter, 2015*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ UN Women Regional Office, *GTG in Europe and Central Asia, Summary of Questionnaire Responses, 1st Quarter, 2015*, p. 8.

Table 3:2 ECA Joint Programmes that UN Women has led or participated in ¹⁰¹

Country	DaO ¹⁰²	Type of UN Women presence	JP with a main focus on GEEW	JP whose main focus was not GEEW
Albania	2007	CO with DOA	x	x
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2013	CO with DOA	x	
Georgia		CO with DOA	x	
Kazakhstan		MCO with DOA		
Kosovo		Programme presence (supervised by RO)	x	x
Kyrgyzstan	2009	CO with DOA	x	x
Macedonia		Programme presence (supervised by RO)	x	
Moldova	2011	CO with DOA	x	x
Serbia		Programme presence (supervised by RO)	x	x
Tajikistan		Programme presence (supervised by MCO)		x
Turkey		Project presence (supervised by RO)	x	
Ukraine		Project presence (supervised by RO)		
Uzbekistan		Project presence (supervised by MCO)		

A description of joint programmes as a coordinating mechanism is provided in Volume II, Appendix XIII, which captures the types of joint programmes in which UN Women participates in different countries and with different types of presence. UN Women has engaged in joint programmes on violence against women in many countries (VAW is one of UN Women's impact areas and there is a UN Trust Fund specifically for joint programmes on VAW). Common partner agencies are UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. Types of joint programmes also include sub-regional programmes such as the "Joint Central Asia Regional Migration Programme" (2010-2015), implemented by IOM in partnership with UN Women and the World Bank in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; however, implementation remains country-based.

The 2013 Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the UN System pointed out several limitations to greater coherence in joint programmes. It noted that the opportunity to develop a common vision and partnership for gender was missed in the majority of joint gender programmes, often due to underinvestment in design. In addition, the conceptual understanding of the joint modality and its implications for business practices and day-to-day coordination among

¹⁰¹ Countries with no UN Women presence – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro and Turkmenistan – are not included. Blank cells indicate no joint programmes.

¹⁰² Shows the year the country requested to become a DaO country, hence, levels of implementation will vary.

partners was limited, with some lack of clarity regarding the desired extent of integration and how best to achieve it.¹⁰³

Based on experience of joint programmes in the ECA region, several of these issues still hold. UN agencies collaborate most visibly in preparing concept notes and proposals for funding and in an initial planning stage. During implementation, UN participating agencies have a tendency to implement in parallel and separately. This applies whether UN Women has full DOA or a programme presence. As was the case in Turkey, a programme presence country, UN entities involved with UN Women in two joint programmes started off jointly fundraising but thereafter the planning, analysis, implementation and reporting lost their collaborative aspects, reducing the potential for synergy, stronger development results, and learning across agencies. This made it more challenging for UN Women to add greater value to operational activities of the UN system.¹⁰⁴ This was also the case in the Kosovo joint programme on women, peace, and security; this joint programme with UNDP tended to be segmented between UNDP and UN Women outputs. Similar challenges have been faced by UN Women in Kyrgyzstan.

This does not mean that joint programmes do not achieve results, but the potential for enhancing coherence, partnership, and ownership in the UN system is under-exploited. UN Women Albania's experience with implementing joint programmes under the DaO framework is insightful. UN Women Albania has coordinated its efforts with clusters of other UN entities through a variety of joint programming mechanisms under the Delivering as One framework, which are organized under Outputs with their Annual Work Plans. Even under a DaO approach which facilitates the coordination of GEEW across agencies, UN Women Albania's experience has shown that the effectiveness of its coordination efforts are best served when there is no competition for funds, when the individuals engaged have a trusted relationship, and when the partnership between UN Women and implementing UN entities is based on equal power relations.

3.3.5 Building coherence around GEEW within the UNCT, supported by the GTG

This section examines the contributions of UN Women through its leadership and support of Gender Theme Groups (GTG) which are a common, critical mechanism for building coherence within the UNCT around GEEW. In some countries, the GTG have now become Results Groups on Gender that have taken on GTG functions. It also discusses some of the challenges of the GTGs/RGGs in influencing the work of other UN entities and the support which UN Women has brought to strengthening these inter-agency mechanisms.

Profile of GTGs and RGGs in ECA

Table 3.3 provides an overview of the GTGs and Result Groups on Gender in the ECA region. All countries, regardless of whether UN Women has a presence, have a Gender Theme Group or equivalent. In countries where UN Women has no presence, the Group is led by another UN agency. Of the 18 countries in the region, 10 have extended GTGs that include representatives of other stakeholder groups such as donors, civil society organizations, and government counterparts. UN Women's type of presence does not seem to be a factor in whether a country has an extended GTG. Information is not systematically available on which stakeholder groups are included in the

¹⁰³ UN Women. "Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System: Final Synthesis Report," November 2013, p. 27 and United Nations. "Independent Evaluation of Delivering As One." New York: United Nations, September 2012.

¹⁰⁴ For more detail, see the Turkey case study.

extended GTG for each country; nonetheless, Volume II, Appendix XIV provides the information made available for this evaluation.

Table 3:3 ECA Countries With and Without an Extended GTG¹⁰⁵

ECA Countries	Type of presence	Has an Extended GTG
Albania	CO with DOA	
Armenia	No UN Women presence	x
Azerbaijan	No UN Women presence	x
Belarus	No UN Women presence	x
Bosnia and Herzegovina	CO with DOA	x
Georgia	CO with DOA	x
Kazakhstan	MCO with DOA	
Kosovo	Programme presence (supervised by RO)	x
Kyrgyzstan	CO with DOA	x
Macedonia	Programme presence (supervised by RO)	
Moldova	CO with DOA	x
Montenegro	No UN Women presence	
Serbia	Programme presence (supervised by RO)	
Tajikistan	Programme presence (supervised by MCO)	x
Turkey	Programme presence (supervised by RO)	
Turkmenistan	No UN Women presence (supervised by MCO)	
Ukraine	Programme presence (supervised by RO)	x
Uzbekistan	Programme presence (supervised by MCO)	

Like other theme groups, the GTG is intended as a mechanism to develop joint action and coordination at the national level. The terms of reference for the GTG are prepared at the discretion of the UNCT of each country. Guidance on what makes an effective GTG dates from 2005 in a resource guide developed by UNIFEM.¹⁰⁶ The degree to which countries refer to this guidance is not known (Albania, for example, does refer to it in its GTG ToR), but in comparing GTG activities from the country cases to the resource guide, the principal objectives remain the same. Overall, the aim of the GTG is to strengthen the focus of the UNCT on gender equality and women's rights through the coordination mechanisms of the UNDAF and the national development assistance cycle. This includes:

- Mainstreaming gender into the UNDAF and CCA documents
- Mainstreaming gender in the MDGs (or now the SDGs)
- Playing a role in campaigning on the SDGs

¹⁰⁵ N=18 which includes the non-presence countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro, and Tajikistan

¹⁰⁶ UNIFEM. "Resource Guide for Gender Theme Groups," January 2005.

- Building the capacity of the national gender machinery to mainstream gender
- Supporting national governments on CEDAW

The resource guide identifies a range of activities from which to choose, and, importantly, specifies that the scope of the GTG should be relevant to the country’s needs and in line with the capacities of GTG members. The composition of the GTG can be exclusively UNCT members (ideally with representation of all UN agencies) or more broad-based to expand its circle of influence, which the extended GTG accomplishes. An analysis of the GTGs in the four case studies and three virtual consultations conducted for this evaluation shows variation in the emphasis each GTG gives to the objectives above. However, interviews confirm what the resource guide recommends – that coordinating a broader range of actors increases its relevance.

Finding 8: UN Women is contributing to greater coherence among UN entities in the region through its role in GTGs. However, GTGs face challenges in fulfilling their intended role. Capacity issues have been raised and the UN Women Regional Office has taken critical steps to address these.

The ECA country case studies for the evaluation all confirm the important role that the GTGs or similar interagency thematic groups are playing at the country level. The survey of GTG members in ECA indicates that the GTG is considered to be a key platform for: knowledge and information sharing about GEEW issues at the country level; advocating for GEEW at country level, strengthening accountability mechanisms for GEEW in the UN. The GTG is seen as an effective vehicle for improving capacity on GEEW across the UN. (See Volume II, Appendix VI with GTG survey results.) Survey respondents also indicated that GTGs generally foster coherence across the UN and reduce duplication across entities. When asked to provide examples that would illustrate such improvements with regard to coherence, synergy, and reduced duplication:

- Many respondents noted that having a common work plan in the GTG was a key element of coherence, reduced duplication and synergies. A smaller number suggested, however, that these work plans are not always realistic, are not always co-financed by different agencies, and that progress is not always appropriately monitored.
- Another small group of respondents indicated that the development of joint programmes was the best example of coherence and synergies; the area of EVAW was most frequently referenced.

Illustrative examples of improved coherence, reduced duplication

Well-coordinated (internally with UN agencies and externally with other groups from CS) advocacy campaign and technical support provided to introduce temporary measures ensuring gender equality in political process.

Working group works on development of discussion papers on key issues. When reproductive rights in the country deteriorated, core members of the group produced a paper that was used by UNCT members in advocating for human rights,

GTG plays a leading role in development of GTG Annual Work Plan reflecting inputs of all group members UN agencies. There are no duplication, due to integrated activities of member agencies and defined their roles in the implementation. There are defined joint efforts of related agencies in AWP, where it is applicable, resulted from discussions on joint support to be provided to government, when it requested.

GTG successfully leads on the division of labor between the UN entities in the provision of support to the national partners in the implementation of the GE agenda.

Source: Comments provided by respondents to the GTG survey

- Advocacy campaigns and activities were also noted as examples of noticeably improved coordination, both for annual initiatives such as the 16-days of activism and for more targeted efforts.
- A small number of respondents also noted that the GTG is used to coordinate UN system support for national partners on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Challenges for GTGs

One of the struggles that frequently emerged in the evidence on GTGs (in case studies, virtual consultations, and this evaluation's survey of GTG members in ECA) was the uneven technical capacity of UN agencies in GEEW, as noted in section 3.2 on relevance.

The lack of GEEW capacity among UN agencies increases the demand on UN Women and the GTGs to provide technical support or training before UN agencies can engage meaningfully in the GTG, operationalize their own agency gender mandates in a coordinated fashion, and undertake the gender mainstreaming tasks that ensue from the GTG work plan. This highlights the importance of the training provided by the UN Women Regional Office to support GTGs and UNCTs in gender mainstreaming work. The UN Women Regional Office Training of Trainers in November 2015 (under the aegis of the Regional Strategic Partnership Framework on Gender in Europe and Central Asia among UN Women, UNFPA, and UNDP Regional Offices) endeavoured to build a roster of Gender Experts that will be able to assist UNCT in gender mainstreaming in country programming.¹⁰⁷

The commitment and support of the RC and the UNCT is another critical factor in the ability of the GTG to fulfill its role and influence the UNCT. This leadership commitment to GEEW and to the work the GTG is inconsistent across countries, which affects the relative importance that individual entities give to assigning human resources to participate in GTG or equivalent groups.

At a regional level, GEEW capacity gaps and the need for stronger coordination to address GEEW issues across the UN system have not gone unrecognized. In December 2014, the Regional Directors at the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) meeting proposed the establishment of the ECA-Regional Working Group on Gender (RWGG) consisting of UN agencies and related entities working at regional level on GEEW.¹⁰⁸ The group's efforts are aimed at supporting the UNCTs and GTGs at country level, as well as providing guidance and technical support on gender-related issues at regional level to the RCM and the newly created R-UNDG/Programme Advisory Group and partners. According to the first work plan of the RWGG, the direct support to GTGs and UNCTs include support to gender mainstreaming in planning frameworks, support for conducting the gender scorecard, and results-based management training.¹⁰⁹ The next section elaborates on the

¹⁰⁷ UN Women, UNDG. "Regional Strategic Partnership Framework on Gender in Europe and Central Asia: UN Women, UNFPA, and UNDP Regional Offices," July 2015. And UN Development Group. "Regional Training of Trainers (TOT) in Europe and Central Asia (ECA): Mainstreaming Gender in UN Common Country Programming in the Context of the 2030 Agenda," November 2015.

¹⁰⁸ UN Development Group. "Terms of Reference (Draft): Europe and Central Asia Regional Working Group on Gender," December 2015.

¹⁰⁹ More specifically, the assistance consists of: (i) support to Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine UNCTs, through the Peer Support Group (PSG), in the application of twin-track approach of gender to CCA and UNDAF planning process; (ii) support to BiH, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine GTGs to conduct gender scorecards effectively in 2016; and (iii) RBM training for GTG members in Turkey, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan. See UN Development Group. "Europe and Central Asia Regional Working Group on Gender (ECA-RWGG) 2016 Joint Annual Work Plan," December 2015.

contributions of UN Women, with the support of the GTGs, to gender mainstreaming in the UN system.

3.3.6 Contributions to gender mainstreaming in the UN System

This section provides evidence of UN Women's contribution to mainstreaming gender in UN planning documents (such as the UNDAF, Common Country Assessment, and evaluations related to these) and to building GEEW capacity of UN agencies. It also examines the utilization of accountability mechanisms such as the Scorecard methodology to ensure gender mainstreaming.

Finding 9: In collaboration with other UN partners, UN Women at regional and country level has contributed to building capacity to mainstream gender in the preparation of the UNDAFs in the region. Now the challenge is to ensure that those GEEW results are resourced, implemented, and monitored.

Gender mainstreaming in UN planning frameworks is strongly featured in the work of the GTGs. There are several examples of how UN Women offices have contributed to strengthening the capacity of UNCTs to better integrate GEEW into core planning documents:

- UN Women provided GEEW training in Georgia at the UNDAF retreat, which was much appreciated by participants, and the GTG, led by UN Women Georgia, had a retreat in April 2015 to build member skills in how to conduct effective stakeholder engagement.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Jade Buddenberg and Andrew Aitken, *The Art of Stakeholder Collaboration 1 – Workshop Report, 21-23 April 2015*, Tbilisi, Georgia. Gender Theme Group Retreat, 2015 Workshop Report, by UN Women and the Collective Leadership Institute.

- In Serbia, UN Women provided and paid for GEEW training for GTG members. In the view of UN Women staff, this catalyzed a discussion within the UNCT team about coordination on gender mechanisms and led to an agreement that all UN agencies need to coordinate before initiating activities in the country as a matter of good practice.
- In Albania and BiH, the UN Women Regional Office and the UN Women Headquarters provided training in GEEW to UNCTs which was appreciated and UN agencies expressed a desire for more capacity building opportunities. Moreover, in the survey of ECA UN Women Staff for this evaluation, 67 per cent of respondents (n=15) agreed or strongly agreed that *“UN Women has contributed significantly to capacity building for gender equality and the empowerment of women across the UN system.”*

In January 2016, the UN Women Regional Office provided training to Result Group on Gender in Ankara to support the development of joint work plan under their new UNDAF (UNDCS).

The RO plans GEEW training for other countries in the region: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine in 2016, as requested through the RWGG.

Training in GEEW for UNCT members is a common approach, but there are other means of contributing to stronger capacity for mainstreaming in the UNCT (see sidebar).

Other Initiatives to build the GEEW capacity of UN agencies

A review of case studies and virtual consultation data show that UN Women has undertaken other kinds of initiatives to build capacity of UN entities in GEEW, often appearing in the UNCT work plan. These are detailed in Volume II, Appendix XV and are summarized as:

- Conducting research on GEEW to serve as a basis for common understanding
- Developing a gender mainstreaming strategy (Kyrgyzstan)
- Hiring a Gender Expert
- Articulating institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming

It is too early to ascertain the effectiveness of these efforts.

UN Women RO has provided support to all UN Women M/COs and PP countries in UNDAF development. CCA, work plan/TOR of GTG, joint work plan of Results Group, implementation and reporting of UNDAF. This covers 12 UNDAF roll-out countries from 2014, 2 UNDAF roll-out countries from 2015, and 3 UNDAF roll-out countries from 2016.

Integrating gender issues into the UNDAF and other planning documents is a critical entry point for GEEW accountability within the UN system but is also a lever for UN agencies to support a government’s commitments to its own gender action plans and policies. One of the indicators used to measure gender mainstreaming in UNDAFs is the existence of a gender-specific outcome.¹¹¹ Six countries have such an outcome in their current UNDAFs – BiH, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Turkey¹¹² and Ukraine. Following a mid-term review, Albania ensured gender is mainstreamed in all four outcomes in the revised results matrix for Albania’s Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016, its principal planning document under the Delivering as One framework.¹¹³

Twelve new UNDAFs (i.e. results and resource frameworks) and twelve CCAs for the period 2016-2020 were analyzed by the UN Women RO in the ECA region. This assessment showed that 50 per

¹¹¹ This is one of the indicators in the gender scorecard methodology.

¹¹² In the case of Turkey, the document in question is the UN Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS) which has GEEW as one of its four main pillars and two out of eight outcomes are gender specific.

¹¹³ UN Women Albania is the Outcome Coordinator for Outcome 1 which reads as: “human rights and gender equality considerations guide interactions between citizens and institutions.” See Government of Albania, and United Nations. “Programme of Cooperation, 2012-2016,” 2012.

cent of UNDAFs had gender-specific outcome statements while the other half was either gender neutral (21.8 per cent) or gender blind (28.7 per cent). In addition, out of these gender specific outcomes, only 31.8 per cent had gender responsive indicators. In some cases, gender outcomes did not have any indicator that measured or considered gender. On a brighter side, 10 of 12 countries had indicators that (at least) measured gender under outcomes that were not gender specific or gender sensitive.

Beyond a gender-specific outcome, integrating gender issues in the results frameworks of planning documents is also important. Albania has been able to strengthen the formulation of outputs and indicators from a gender-equality perspective in their current DaO Programme of Cooperation, 2012-2016.

The UN Women ECA RO conducted a desk review of 12 UNDAFs (for the 2016-2020 period) and their respective CCAs in the ECA region and found that while significant efforts had been made to integrate gender across UNDAFs, there were still some gaps in systematically promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in these planning frameworks.¹¹⁴ These included: ensuring stronger gender analysis in CCAs that are then clearly reflected in UNDAFs; ensuring that UNDAFs include gender-responsive indicators; ensuring consistency in the integration of gender across all thematic areas (including environment and disaster risk reduction); and considering all relevant vulnerable/disadvantaged groups (such as LGTBT persons).

More gender-sensitive planning document and results matrix are necessary but not sufficient for gender mainstreaming in common country programming. The institutional effects of UN Women's coordination efforts in the planning stage are subsequently affected by funding and processes for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, external factors that are often outside of UN Women's control.

UN agencies also need to raise funds for gender-related outcomes and outputs under a Delivering as One framework.¹¹⁵ BiH, as one example, has not been successful in securing funds for the gender-specific outcome to date and this could potentially be an issue for other DaO countries. More broadly, the evidence shows that a well-grounded, up-to-date underlying cause analysis of gender equality and women's human rights also needs to be well reflected in the narrative of UNDAFs and their CCA and understood by all participating UN agencies. In the case of Albania, after the midterm and final reviews of the DaO Programme of Cooperation and results from the Scorecard Report, the GTG recognized the need for a gender position paper to support the Common Country Assessment Report being developed before the next UNDAF round. This measure was intended to ensure that a deeper gender analysis informed the next cycle of planning frameworks.¹¹⁶ In Kosovo, UN Women contributed to mainstreaming gender in the Common Development Plan (CDP), the UN's primary planning document,¹¹⁷ for the next cycle (2016-2019). The CDP also took into account results of the Scorecard. UN Women Kyrgyzstan contributed to the mid-term gender review of the UNDAF.

In both Turkey and BiH, results groups are being established for each to align with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). In BiH, the Resident Coordinator abolished the GTG in 2009-2010

¹¹⁴ UN Women, Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia: Application of Twin-Track Approach of Gender in UNDAFs and CCAs to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women), prepared by UN Women ECA Regional Office, February 2016.

¹¹⁵ Under DaO, output-level results now need to be specified in the Joint Work Plans of Results Groups, not in the UNDAF results matrix.

¹¹⁶ See the Albania case study for more information.

¹¹⁷ The CPD is the strategic framework for the UN Kosovo Team (UNKT) coordinated under the UN Development Coordinator (UNDC) and is similar to the UNDAF but not endorsed by national government. The first CPD covered the period of 2011-2015 and 21 UNKT members are accountable to it.

and re-established the group in 2011 for the special purpose of creating joint programmes under the One Programme; it became the UNDAF Gender Results Group and is chaired by UN Women. In Turkey, at the time of the field visit, some interviewees expressed concern about the future of the GTG if it were to be replaced by a results group linked to a gender outcome, as the GTG serves a larger purpose for inter-agency coordination on GEEW. However, in practice the Results Group has a separate work plan to cover the GTG activities.

Finally, the data have also highlighted the importance of gender mainstreaming in the UNDAF and an active role of the GTG in non-presence countries like Montenegro. In the case of countries supervised by the Kazakhstan MCO, the UN Women Office from the MCO participates in the development of the UNDAF for each country, as well as in the UNCT and GTG, however, data are not available to ascertain their relative effectiveness.¹¹⁸

Finding 10: Six countries in the ECA region conducted Gender Scorecard exercises during the period reviewed. The results contributed to improving gender mainstreaming in UNDAF planning frameworks but their effects on internal policies and programming by UN entities remains to be seen.

Aside from efforts to mainstream gender through UNDAF planning documents, UN Women promotes the use of the UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (the “Gender Scorecard”) as the principal accountability mechanism for reporting on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming by UNCTs.¹¹⁹ The Gender Scorecard, which is focused at country level, is part of a comprehensive accountability framework for GEEW in the UN system comprising three mechanisms.¹²⁰ During the period 2011-2015, the Gender Scorecard exercise was undertaken in Albania, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Turkey, Moldova, and Macedonia.¹²¹ The case studies for Albania and Kosovo provide substantial information on the results and effectiveness of this tool, while results for the other countries were not yet available. BiH and Ukraine will conduct the Gender Scorecard in 2016, with support from the UN Women Regional Office. Other countries, such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus are postponing this exercise until the UNDG issues updated Gender Scorecard guidance later in 2016...

In June 2015, the UNDG Gender Equality Task Team led by UN Women commissioned a desk review of UNCT performance indicators for GEEW through the implementation of the Gender Scorecard. The review compared results from 19 Gender Scorecard exercises conducted in 2012-2014 with results from a review of 2008-2011 scorecards.¹²² The ECA region included in the study included

¹¹⁸ Barnes, Joseph (2015).

¹¹⁹ “The United Nations (UN) Gender Scorecard is a standardized assessment of what UN organizations as a whole contribute to gender mainstreaming, and consequently to the promotion of gender equality at a local level. It enables the UN development system to assess how well gender has been mainstreamed against minimum standards pre-defined through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) cycle, and allows for comparisons and learning between countries that have already undergone the gender scorecard exercise.”

¹²⁰ The UN-SWAP is one of three inter-connecting mechanisms that comprise a comprehensive accountability framework for GEEW in the UN system. While the UN-SWAP’s focus is on corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the entity-level, the focus of the UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (Gender Scorecard) is on joint processes and institutional arrangements within the UNCT. The third mechanism, which is currently in the design phase, is intended to focus on gender equality development results at country and normative levels.

¹²¹ The reports from the Gender Scorecard exercise from the latter three countries will be available in 2016.

¹²² For the ECA region, this set included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, and Tajikistan.

results of Albania and Kosovo for the more recent period.¹²³ As noted in section 3.3.6, the Scorecard contributed to the improvement of gender mainstreaming in UN planning frameworks, but it remained to be seen what effects the Scorecard would have on gender mainstreaming in the UNCT. As the Kosovo case study points out, there is little evidence to date of influence on gender mainstreaming in programming.

The Albania Scorecard exercise is too recent to know what the follow-through is likely to be. Such limitations are corroborated by interviews in Turkey in which respondents expressed concern about the ownership of the Scorecard exercise among heads of UN agencies, who questioned the effects it would have on how agencies actually work.¹²⁴

Kyrgyzstan had a similar experience in its efforts to implement a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) for the UNCT. Consulted GTG and other UNCT members widely agreed that, until now, the implementation of the GMS has been weak due to limited commitment and capacity within the different UNCT member agencies. While the document had originally been positively received and considered relevant, it was effectively “put on the shelf and nothing happened”.¹²⁵ The limited use of the GMS is also related to the fact that it is insufficiently aligned with the current UNDAF.

Nonetheless, in Georgia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, it has been shown that with strengthened awareness of gender issues, through capacity building on GEEW, UN agencies respond better to accountability tools and are more apt to engage with them meaningfully (rather than ticking boxes).

Finding 11: The UN Women Regional Office, in its coordination role, has made contributions to regional level mechanisms, most notably the ECA Regional undg. Now,

Challenges with accountability frameworks in thematic areas

The UNSG’s 7-Point agenda provides a framework for ensuring accountability of the UNCT and to monitor on-going activities in the area of GEEW in peacebuilding, including the implementation of the NAP on UNSCR 1325. By adopting the 7-point action plan, all UN organizations who implement peacebuilding initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic have committed to adequately incorporate gender equality principles in programme design and implementation. In particular, the plan includes a commitment to ensure that 15 per cent of UN-managed funds in support of peacebuilding is dedicated to projects whose principal objective (consistent with existing mandates) is to address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality, or empower women). This applies to funds provided by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). As leader of the GTG, UN Women was expected to play an integral role in assessing the quality of projects proposed to the PBF.

Feedback from UN Women and representatives of the UNCT suggest that to date the 15 per cent target allocation for gender equality in PBF-funded projects was not met in all cases and that overall some projects had insufficiently integrated a gender perspective. This shortcoming appears to be largely due to capacity gaps both within UN entities and the PBF Secretariat in addressing gender equality in their projects, particularly in linking dedicated financial resources to GEEW (e.g. by using some kind of gender marker). Additional challenges have been the compressed timeframe of the process for approving funding proposals, and UN Women’s own capacity for providing the necessary project reviews within that short timeframe.

¹²³ UN Development Group. “UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Desk Review 2012-2014, Final draft.” 18 June 2015. The Albania scorecard results became available in September 2015. The Kosovo scorecard report became available in March 2014.

¹²⁴ For more detail, see the Turkey case study.

¹²⁵ The same observation was made in the Evaluation Report on Implementation of UNCT Kyrgyzstan Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (March 2015)

expectations are high for a continued and more strategic engagement with entities in the region.

At regional level, UN Women ECA RO is perceived to have made important contributions to date through its work in the R-UNDG and support for creation/convening of the following important sub-groups that are now a part of the regional architecture.

- **Creating and chairing the RWGG:** The creation of the RWGG is recognized as an important achievement for the region, and as one survey respondent noted, *“The ECA Regional Office has initiated the setting up of a regional inter-agency thematic group on gender in the end of 2015... The participatory approach in the setup of the RWGG is also appreciated. The expectations are high for such a group and the leadership of UN Women is anticipated as well.”* Consulted stakeholders cited the importance of such a group for regional coordination and expressed the desire for the group to focus on key priority issues in ECA region such as VAW, migration, and political participation. Country level data, including from the GTG survey, suggest that there are needs/expectations for greater support from the regional UNDG for GTG at country level and that the RWGG could help fill important gaps in capacity. However, resourcing the RWGG (both in terms of financial and human resources) may be a constraint in moving forward.
- **Participating in the PSG:** Interviewed and surveyed stakeholders at regional level all recognized the important contributions that UN Women has made through the PSG to strengthen UNCT and GTG capacity for mainstreaming gender in the UNDAF. They noted that UN Women contributes to different facets of the PSG work, including capacity building for UNCT and GTG on mainstreaming gender in the UNDAF, providing necessary technical expertise on GEEW, positioning GEEW in the agenda, use of accountability tools by the UNCT, and overall strengthening of the PSG to provide joint gender-related support to UNCT and GTG.

Stakeholders also acknowledge that the UN Women Regional Office was constrained during its start-up phase, yet it has nonetheless been able to play an active role in these inter-agency fora.

3.3.7 Factors that affect interagency coordination on GEEW

This section identifies external or contextual factors that are shared across two or more countries and that have an enabling or limiting effect on interagency coordination in general and on UN Women’s coordination efforts in particular. Both country and UN system dynamics are considered.

Finding 12: The most enabling factor for GEEW coordination in the region, affecting five countries to date, has been preparation for EU accession, favouring efforts especially for GEEW normative work. The most limiting factors have been the dwindling donor environment and political uncertainty.

Enabling factors

EU accession requirements. At the moment, five countries have started or are waiting to start the EU accession process, including Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. EU accession requirements offer some additional leverage to UN agencies in promoting a gender equality and human rights agenda, as pre-accession countries must meet the gender equality standards. This is best illustrated in Albania which is seeking funds from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Agreement Programme (IPAP II) to establish Gender Objectives and Indicators. EU accession has been a driver for setting the legal and institutional framework for the advancement of gender equality in Kosovo,

Macedonia, and BiH.¹²⁶ Georgia on the other hand signed the Association Agreement with the EU, which has been an accelerating factor for gender equality, which is seen as one of the values and priorities for EU. In this context, GTG aimed to underline the importance to emphasize GEEW as a part of conditionality under the Association Agreement.

Donor preference and national government support for joint programming. Donors, who are reducing their operations and investments in the ECA region, view joint programming favourably, as it creates efficiencies for them. In virtual consultations and case study interviews, representatives of national government bodies also tended to favour this modality.

Limiting factors

Donor environment and dwindling resources. The funding environment and availability of donor funds have been in downward mode for most ECA countries. All are considered middle-income¹²⁷ and six are in the process of applying for EU accession.¹²⁸ Other EU neighbouring countries such as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are currently linked to the EU via the “Eastern Partnership” but are unlikely to be joining the UE in the foreseeable future.¹²⁹ The prevailing donor environment has increased competition for scarce resources among UN agencies, which has a counteractive effect on interagency coordination. With the exception of Sweden’s SIDA, donors in the region do not necessarily prioritize gender equality, whether the focus is economic development or trade.^{130 131}

Donors’ unfulfilled potential to support coordination. While donors interviewed say that they would like UN Women to play a stronger role in coordinating the UN, they do not necessarily stress the UN Women coordination role with the other UN entities, at the country level, or in their role as members of governing bodies of UN funds and programmes. Moreover, some donors suffer from internal communication problems and may not even be aware that the UN Women positions they are funding (e.g., SIDA support for Head of Office/Gender Specialist positions in four programme presence countries) are the key to maintaining UN Women Programme presence in several countries and play an important coordination role.

Conservatism. Respondents in Georgia in particular highlighted the challenging cultural environment for achieving gender equality, noting the persistence of conservative and historically

¹²⁶ UN Women. “Strategic Note: UN Women Country Office for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Project Office in FYR Macedonia and Project Office in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), 2014-2015.”

¹²⁷ According to the 2015 World Bank classification, upper-middle income countries include Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, BiH, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Turkmenistan. Lower-middle income countries are Armenia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

¹²⁸ At the moment, five countries have started or are waiting to start the EU accession process, including Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Potential candidates, i.e. those that were promised the prospect of joining when they are ready, include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.[1] Application is more complicated for Kosovo, the independence of which has not yet been recognized by all EU Member States. Moreover, negotiations remain stalemated until both Serbia and Kosovo can agree on how the Serbian minority in the north of Kosovo will be treated, administered, and protected. Source: European Commission. (2016, January 8). European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index_en.htm

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ UN Women. “Europe and Central Asia Strategic Note (A Bridge Plan for 2014).”

¹³¹ The MCO in Kazakhstan also notes limited donor interest in the region, as a result of which UN Women aspires to consolidating its efforts with other UN agencies, especially the more specialized ones, using its comparative advantage. This is reported in UN Women MCO Strategic Note of 2014-2015.

rooted discrimination against women. This is manifest in signs of resistance to a gender equality agenda within government and society,¹³² however, UN Women staff also attribute the present challenge to the weaker presence of UNIFEM. With the limited resources of one staff person, coordination with other UN agencies was also more difficult. In other countries in the region, deeply conservative attitudes may not entirely impede, but slow efforts to achieve progress in gender equality and equal rights for women. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the prevalence of deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes is said to affect the pace at which GEEW policies are implemented.

Lack of gender-disaggregated data. Many consulted stakeholders referred to the paucity of quality data and the low capacity for data collection and analysis at national level. This extends to data disaggregation by gender. This directly affects the evidence base for gender inequality and making the link to development issues and has affected the quality of CCA and, in consequence, UNDAFs.¹³³ Gender-disaggregated data are important for policy influencing. Respondents in Kyrgyzstan, for example, noted the lack of genuine ownership of the country's gender commitments as a consequence. UNCT members in Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Turkmenistan noted data deficiencies and are taking measures to support the government to fill the gaps. The lack of systematized data especially affects interagency coordination, as all agencies require such data for gender mainstreaming in their sectors and areas of work.

Finding 13: UN Women's effectiveness in implementing its coordination mandate is also affected by factors within UN system, specifically, how supportive the UNRC is, how receptive Heads of Agencies are to UN Women's coordination mandate, the availability of funding for joint work, and the effectiveness of GEEW inter-agency coordination mechanisms and their members' GEEW capacities. All of these factors also affect the culture of collaboration between UN entities.

Interviews and survey data identify four main factors within the UN system that can either facilitate or limit the potential for UN Women to effectively coordinate UN system entities on issues related to GEEW. These factors include: leadership of the RC office, acknowledgment or recognition of UN Women's coordination role from Heads of Agency, resources for joint work on GEEW, and the dynamism and capacity of the interagency coordination mechanism for GEEW. These factors also affect Delivering as One arrangements.

- **Leadership and support for GEEW from RC office.** This was one of the three main external factors that UN Women ECA region staff responding to the survey identified as facilitating UN Women's coordination role at the country level (47 per cent, 7 of 15 respondents). This factor was also raised in case studies and virtual consultations, especially in Albania, BiH, Georgia, Serbia, and Kosovo. As an enabling factor, the backing of the Resident Coordinator helps UN Women to negotiate a space in the UNCT and can help to overcome constraints related to type of presence (e.g., when UN Women head of office is able to be a part of the UNCT). At the same time, however, RC support for GEEW and for UN Women's role in enhancing coordination varies by country and therefore does not yet reflect an institutionalized approach to seeking the greatest complementarity between UN Women and the RC.

¹³² Georgia makes particular reference to efforts at introducing quotas for elections and the challenge of engaging politicians in this commitment.

¹³³ One of the key findings of the UN Women ECA RO desk review is that there was a shortage of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in both UNDAFs and CCAs. UN Women, Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia: Application of Twin-Track Approach of Gender in UNDAFs and CCAs to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women), prepared by UN Women ECA Regional Office, February 2016.

- **Acceptance of UN Women’s role by other Heads of Agency.** As noted in Finding 2 and 3, Heads of Agency in the UN system at country level have different understandings of UN Women’s coordination mandate and diverse expectations of how that mandate should be implemented, including the degree of emphasis to be given to supporting other entities in gender mainstreaming. Their perspectives are likely to reflect efforts to bolster (diminishing) capacity for GEEW in their entities and also to minimize competition for scarce resources. A significant percentage of UN Women staff who responded to the evaluation survey felt that Head of Agency acceptance of UN Women coordination role was a key facilitating factor for UN Women (40 per cent, 6 of 15 respondents).
- **Resources for joint work on GEEW (availability and implications for competition).** Joint programmes have been one of the key mechanisms for UN Women collaborating with other UN entities on GEEW. In DaO countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Albania, funding through the One Fund has provided incentives for joint programmes in the past, but these funds are diminishing. Other than the UNTF on EAW there are few other sources for funding joint programmes in the region. The limited funds for joint programmes is aggravated by the environment of limited funding overall for GEEW and hence competition for scarce donor resources, which influences UN agency perspectives on UN Women’s operational and coordination role and also limits the extent to which agencies are willing to trust each other and share innovative ideas. Both factors were also identified in the UN Women staff survey as a factor that hinders UN Women’s UN system coordination role at the country level (each factor noted by 40 per cent, 6 of 15 respondents).
- **Dynamism and capacity of UN inter-agency gender coordination mechanisms** (e.g., GTG or similar coordination mechanism). In the evaluation’s survey of UN Women staff, the dynamism of gender networks within the UN system was noted by 47 per cent (7 of 15 respondents). Case studies also point to the important role that GTGs play at the country level. However, as noted in finding 8 (on challenges for GTGs), the dynamism of these groups is affected by uneven capacity of gender focal points (GFP) and disparate levels of commitment to GEEW across the UN.

These issues reflect the types of challenges that the UN faces in building a culture for Delivering as One at the country level. In the original DaO pilot countries (such as Albania in the ECA region), there is a stronger enabling environment in that regard even though challenges persist. According to UN Women staff who participated in this evaluation’s survey, the lack of Delivering as One culture at the country level is one of the three main external factors that hinder UN Women’s coordination role at country level (47 percent or 7 of 15 respondents).

3.4 Integration of Gender Equality and Human Rights-based Approaches

3.4.1 Introduction

This section examines the extent to which UN Women has incorporated a human rights-based approach and gender equality in its coordination efforts in the ECA region. The findings illustrate/highlight the extent to which UN Women’s coordination role enhances application of key human rights frameworks, adopts other principles of human rights-based approaches, and addresses the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination.

3.4.2 Human Rights

Finding 14: The UN system in ECA is framing its work within a human rights framework, which includes CEDAW. UN Women has used its coordination role to support this effort and to strengthen linkages between global and regional normative frameworks and national priorities/initiatives.

Human rights is one of the three pillars underlying the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a programming principle that cuts across the work of the UN at country level. At a global level, UN is reporting greater alignment between normative and operational aspects of UNCT work, innovations in linking human rights follow-up and reporting processes, and stronger integration of human rights principles and recommendations in UNDAF results framework.¹³⁴ In the ECA region, EU accession criteria are very strong on human rights, thus providing an important backdrop and supporting factor to the work of the UN in advocating for human rights in issues that are emerging in countries in the region,¹³⁵ such as: closing of democratic space (limiting the action of CSOs), minority group issues (e.g., LGBT and Roma); ethnic tensions and violence; violation of civil and political rights; denial of economic, social and cultural rights; and other threats to democratic governance.

As noted in section 1.3, UN Women has been guided by organizational and UN system-wide objectives based on the key normative frameworks for human rights, and more specifically women's human rights (i.e., CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, ICPD, UPR). UN Women has helped mobilize other UN partners in advocating for human rights through its participation and leadership in UNCTs and GTGs and through joint actions with other UN entities in order to contribute to results in these areas.

Promoting/including human rights in UN programming frameworks

In the ECA region 13 new UNDAFs were developed in 2013 and 2014. In accordance with UNDG guidance on the programming principles (which include human rights and gender equality), those programming frameworks are usually framed in a way that acknowledges and supports partner countries' implementation gaps with regard to international human rights frameworks/mechanisms, although the extent and depth of references to human rights frameworks (such as CEDAW) varies across the UNDAFs reviewed. As noted in finding 9 (effectiveness), UN Women has played an important role in enhancing UNDAFs both at regional level, through the PSG, and in the countries reviewed.

In the 2013-2014 Biennium Final Results and Impact Report for Regional UNDG Teams, it indicates that although human rights issues had not been prioritized by the ECA R-UNDG Team, its members still ensured that social exclusion – women rights, rights of marginalized and disadvantaged groups is a clear focus of all programme interventions at the country level and strategic advocacy at the regional level.¹³⁶ The political turmoil that has erupted in Ukraine has elevated human rights issues and this is being addressed by UN agencies with the Secretary General's Rights Up Front initiative. In ECA, the PSG strategic guidance on UNDAFs was planned to reinforce this, ensuring that the indicators for high quality UNDAF/UNCDP would include alignment to national development

¹³⁴ See: UNDG, Desk Review of UNDAFs commencing in 2015, October 2015, p. 6

¹³⁵ Eligibility requirements for membership in the European Union requires that countries have achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, amongst others, as per the European Council in Copenhagen, June 1993.

¹³⁶ R/UNDG ECA, 2013-2014 Biennium Final Results and Impact Report for Regional UNDG Teams, 30 January 2015.

priorities, priorities of a Post-2015 Agenda, and employ HRBA, RBM and gender mainstreaming principles.¹³⁷

The UN Women ECA Regional Office, in collaboration with partners in the ECA Regional Working Group on Gender Equality and the UN Staff College, is helping to enhance/expand the rights based rationale for the importance of gender equality to the SDGs in national contexts, as illustrated by the type of content used, for example, in the Regional Training of Trainers delivered in November 2015 which emphasized global normative frameworks such as CEDAW, Beijing+20, ICPD, and UPR in making the case for mainstreaming gender through localization, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.

Joint reporting against normative frameworks

Although every UNCT is encouraged to submit a confidential report to the CEDAW committee, this had not always been the practice in ECA countries. As noted in Section 3.3 (effectiveness), UNCTs in eight countries submitted a confidential report to the CEDAW Committee¹³⁸, most often with the support of the Gender Theme Group. This report is considered very important in that it brings UN agencies together on gender equality issues and provides an alternative means for the UN to advocate for issues that it feels need to be addressed by the government.

Strengthening implementation of normative frameworks

One key dimension for the work of the UN is reinforcing the capacity of the State (duty bearers) to fulfil the responsibilities of global and national normative frameworks, while recognizing challenges of national political/social/economic dynamics.

In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women is collaborating with OHCHR to support government in the development of a country action plan that lists priorities from the state CEDAW Report, and is also contributing to a national plan on human rights based on the Universal Periodic Review and other UN Treaty body recommendations. Other examples previously mentioned in the section on “contribution to GEEW results” demonstrate efforts of UN Women, with the UNCT, to support governments in implementing normative frameworks.

3.4.3 Gender Equality

Finding 15: UN Women has strong relationships with civil society in most countries in the ECA region, but these relationships deserve greater attention. UN Women could better leverage its coordination mandate to ensure stronger engagement between the UN and civil society and to foster multi-stakeholder platforms in support of GEEW.

The vital role of the women’s movement and the importance of consulting with civil society are stressed in the founding resolution of UN Women.¹³⁹ In the ECA region, links to the women’s

¹³⁷ R/UNDG ECA, *2013-2014 Biennium Final Results and Impact Report for Regional UNDG Teams*, 30 January 2015.

¹³⁸ This includes Azerbaijan (a non-presence country), Belarus (a non-presence country), Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, and Serbia. Both Macedonia and Serbia have done this twice already.

¹³⁹ Articles 54 and 55 of General Assembly resolution July 2010 establishing UN Women: 54. Recognizes that civil society organizations, in particular women’s organizations, play a vital role in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women; 55. Requests the head of the Entity to continue the existing

movement were facilitated in several countries by UNIFEM's relationships with CSOs which carried over to UN Women. In general UN Women offices have developed and maintained strong relations with the women's movement.¹⁴⁰ In Albania for example, since 2008 UN Women has supported the strengthening of CSOs and networks of CSOs focused on women and youth, especially at grassroots level and from rural areas.¹⁴¹ Other examples include the following:

- In Kosovo, maintaining links to the women's movement has also been a prominent feature of its work since UNIFEM. As noted by one UN respondent, it was UN Women that introduced the agency to the women's movement which proved vital to their monitoring work with survivors of the conflict. Today, UN Women Kosovo continues to benefit profoundly from the support of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice of South East Europe (RWL) which was first established in 2006. It is a regional network in Southeast Europe consisting of prominent and influential women in politics and women's human rights activists from Albania, BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia who use their capacity to take advocacy to the highest level within their own countries and in the region.¹⁴²
- In Moldova, UN Women coordinated the efforts of various UN entities (UNAIDS, UNODC, IOM, OHCHR), women's groups and CSOs, the EU Delegation and others in promoting the rights of women representing various social and age groups (Romani women and girls, older women, women victims of domestic violence, women living with or affected by HIV and injective drug users and sex workers, women migrants, women with special needs; women entrepreneurs and women leaders from political parties and CSOs.) Their issues were reflected in the in the political agenda of the political parties and, based on the promise made by the Prime Minister during the dialogue with women, the first ever gynecological cabinet for women with locomotive disabilities was created in the Republic of Moldova fully funded by the state budget. UN Women coordinated key stakeholders, namely the Cabinet of Ministers, Political Parties, CSOs and over 300 women from various backgrounds in the framework of High Level Dialogues between women and the Cabinet of Ministers and the political parties in the Republic of Moldova.¹⁴³

Promoting multi-stakeholder platforms to give voice to "rights holders"

The UN Women Regional Office is seeking to activate and institutionalize Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs) in ECA countries; to date, five countries have established such groups to systematize the engagement of civil society in UN work and in national consultative processes. In most case study countries, UN Women has been successful in using a multi-stakeholder approach to allow diverse civil society actors to provide input into consultations for both global initiatives (such

practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations, and encourages their meaningful contribution to the work of the Entity;

¹⁴⁰ Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Albania, Georgia, Moldova, and Tajikistan.

¹⁴¹ UN Women Albania, *Strategic Note 2014-2016*.

¹⁴² In 2014, UN Women and RWL SEE brought together women MPs from Kosovo and Serbia and the region, as well as representatives of CSOs and governments from all Western Balkans countries, in an International Conference in Saranda, Albania. Participants signed a joint declaration reiterating support for the implementation of the Brussels Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, and calling for an increased role of women in the dialogue and contributions to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. See UNW ECA 2014 RMS Search Results.

¹⁴³ UN Women Moldova, 2014 Annual Report, Progress Note Narrative.

as Beijing+20 reviews) and national policy areas, including the development of national action plans. UN Women has also supported and promoted engagement between civil society, governments, and other UN agencies, as shown below and in the sidebar on Moldova.

- In Kyrgyzstan, the UNiTE network that UN Women supports and encourages is a diverse group of 39 CSOs and state institutions that addresses several intersectional issues ranging from EAW to discrimination of youth and LGBT. The group consolidated itself as a network after years of working together as part of the SG UNiTE campaign. UN Women engages the network not only as part of the UNiTE campaign but also in other consultative processes, for example related to Beijing+20.
- UN Women in Kosovo emphasizes and builds on a multi-stakeholder network based on its strong relationship with civil society groups. The network regularly helps strengthen inter-agency work through formal mechanisms such as the SGG and contributes to global normative processes through consultations such as dialogues held on the Post-2015 development agenda.
- In Albania, there are plans to link the GTG and the Coordination Group on Women in Decision Making which UN Women co-chairs, with UN Women's engagement with the Civil Society Advisory Group. The Coordination Group on Women in Decision Making is composed of international and national actors working on and supporting the agenda of women in decision making at the central and local level. The joining together of these groups will consolidate the consultative process for Post 2015 Agenda, CSW and Beijing +20.¹⁴⁴

UN Women's relationship with the women's movement holds potential for greater linkages and engagement between civil society networks and the UN system. In order to realize that potential, UN Women must also nurture relations with CSOs. In some countries, CSOs begin to note that the relationship with the Entity is different than the relationship they had with former UNIFEM. In Turkey, partly due to the limited UN Women programme presence, respondents noted that UN Women had yet to build strong relations with CSOs and they expressed a desire for much stronger UN Women and UN engagement with civil society, and for UN Women to facilitate a dialogue between civil society and government. In some countries, the context has not been favourable to supporting such platforms for dialogue. For example, for the UN Women MCO in Kazakhstan, the main limitation faced in exercising human rights principles is the absence of strong multi-stakeholder national platforms for the women's movement in the countries under its purview (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). This increases the transaction costs of any consultations and reduces their potential inclusiveness.¹⁴⁵

UN Women's efforts in alliance building can be particularly supportive of a more transformative agenda for gender equality within the UN system. By bringing the perspectives of previously excluded or marginalized groups (i.e. CSOs) into the system, and by adding the potential for significant political pressure to be brought to bear on the discussions on GEEW, UN Women can shift the focus to address systemic barriers to GEEW, by shifting the stakes, stakeholders and power relations within and outside the UN system.

Ten out of 14 countries in the ECA region have or are linked to an Extended GTG and in at least 5 of the countries reviewed, these extended working groups include representatives of civil society.

¹⁴⁴ UN Women Albania, *Strategic Note 2014-2016*.

¹⁴⁵ Adapted from Barnes, Joseph. "UN Women Multi-Country Portfolio Evaluation of Kazakhstan Multi-Country Office for Central Asia Strategic Note 2014 - 2015. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Final Report," October 25, 2015, p. 58.

Extended GTGs provide the possibility for regular multi-stakeholder dialogue and can be beneficial for both the UN system and civil society. See example from Tajikistan in sidebar.

Another example is the Security and Gender Group in Kosovo, which although not technically considered a GTG, provides the kind of regular engagement that builds a foundation for collaboration and a potential for the UN to more regularly hear external perspectives that may challenge their positions.

What appears to be missing are the more explicit efforts for UN Women to promote a UN system in ECA that engages more systematically in dialogue with civil society. This can be challenging in political contexts where there is a reduction in the democratic space for civil society to act (e.g. Ukraine and Turkey). Interestingly, UN Women does not appear to often leverage its Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAG) in support of its efforts to influence the UN system to be more accountable for GEEW commitments, or at least this doesn't come through in the reporting provided.

Extended GTG in Tajikistan

Given the size of the sub-region covered by the Kazakhstan MCO, most UN agencies and entities do not have specialist gender experts, which affects the level of expertise in the GTGs. Extended GTGs that include government, donors, and civil society are particularly relevant. In 2015, while there was a UN Women staff person responsible for convening the group, this was working particularly well in Tajikistan, provides a useful model for the sub-region that would need to be sustained.

UN Women leveraged support from Extended GTG members for the shadow CEDAW report and to take over support to OCSE-funded shelters for women and children when that entity withdrew.

The Extended GTG also allowed UN Women to maintain partnerships with NGOs and other stakeholders even without a specific project. This is considered an important feature for sustainability and ensuring that appropriate partners are identified when opportunities for funded work do arise.¹⁴⁶

Limited information is available on civil society perspectives on how coordinated the UN System is. In one case (Albania), CSOs were fairly uncritical, in their experience, of how UN entities coordinated their work, but the comments mostly referred to clarity around their roles rather than how they worked jointly. Civil society actors also participate in UN internal planning processes, as in the examples below:

- In Georgia, UN Women made sure to involve women's groups in the review process for the drafting of the new UN Partnership Framework (UNPF) for the years of 2016-2020. Based on the collective input, relevant studies and data were reflected in the Country Assessment and a critical review was done of UNPF results' framework from a gender perspective, together with the Gender Theme Group members.¹⁴⁷
- In Macedonia, UN Women coordinated the consultations with CSOs on applying a gender-responsive twin track approach to the UNDAF/Partnership for Sustainable Development (2016-2020).¹⁴⁸

In many of the operating contexts in the ECA region, the national gender architecture and, concomitantly, the operating context, is known to be fragmented, poorly resourced and lacking strong leadership. Ukraine is a case in point. In September 2014, the EU Association Agreement was

¹⁴⁶ Barnes, Joseph. "UN Women Multi-Country Portfolio Evaluation of Kazakhstan Multi-Country Office for Central Asia Strategic Note 2014 - 2015. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Final Report," October 25, 2015, p. 43.

¹⁴⁷ UN Women, Georgia 2014 Annual Report, Progress Note Narrative.

¹⁴⁸ UN Women Macedonia, 2014 Annual Report, Progress Note Narrative.

ratified by the EU and Ukraine and with recent political instability there, military expenditures have gone up. Gender equality was not listed amongst its top priority reforms, with social sector cuts resulting in a downgrade of the national gender equality machinery. To date it has not been fully restored.¹⁴⁹ Even in Albania, with a change in government in 2013, the Gender Equality Unit staffing within the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth went from seven to three experts. In Turkey, the national body for gender equality, according to interviews with civil society actors, has been downgraded, as a result of the conservative government. Formerly under the General Director on the Status of Women, it now reports to a ministry which was downsized and renamed the Ministry of Social Policies and Family, when it used to be the Ministry of Women and Family. According to the ECA UN Women Strategic Note 2014-2017, the Beijing Platform for Action requirement that responsibility for national gender machinery is placed under a cabinet minister showed a decrease in EU countries from 88 per cent to 79 per cent. Given the limited priority given to gender equality by UN Member States, it would be an appropriate role for the UN to help address this capacity issue.

3.4.4 Underlying causes of inequality

Finding 16: The use of an underlying cause approach in the UN system has been limited. There is room for UN Women to strengthen analysis and complementarities in order to address underlying causes of inequality.

The analysis of the inequalities and discriminatory practices and unjust power relations that are central to development problems is a fundamental tenet of an approach that is grounded in gender equality. The underlying causes of inequality are important to consider both in regard to the programming of the UN, as planned and implemented through the UNDAF and joint programmes (and the analytical work, such as CCAs, that inform them), as well as in the institutional dynamics/organizational structures of the UN itself.

UNDAF: The UNDAF provides an opportunity for addressing underlying causes/structural causes of inequality in the programming work of the UN. Half of the recent UNDAFs rolled out in the ECA region in 2013-2014 have an outcome statement focused on gender equality; the other half were either gender neutral or gender blind. While UNDAFs have evolved in terms of their coherence in recent years, a 2010 assessment of UNDAFs noted that they had a tendency not to be very transformational in their approach to gender, even when there was a good analysis, and that they tended instead to be supply driven.¹⁵⁰ As noted in Finding 9, the recent UN Women ECA RO desk review of 12 UNDAFs and their respective CCAs pointed out gaps in systematically promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in these planning frameworks.¹⁵¹

CCAs: CCAs are the tool for identifying and analyzing underlying and root causes of development issues, including gender inequality that can be used to inform planning in the UNDAF. In the ECA region, CCAs would have been developed in countries that adopted new UNDAFs between 2013 and 2015. In fact, evidence of CCAs was found for nine countries.¹⁵² The evaluation team was only able to evaluate two of these, as documents were not available on line, not provided to the evaluation team, or were considered confidential. In Uzbekistan, the GTG took an active role in reviewing planning documents and because of the weaknesses they found in the draft UNDAF results

¹⁴⁹ ECA UN Women, *Regional Office, Strategic Note 2014-2017*.

¹⁵⁰ Rao, Aruna. "Strengthening Gender Equality in United Nations Development Frameworks," 2010, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ UN Women (2016, February). Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia: Application of Twin-Track Approach of Gender in UNDAFs and CCAs to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, prepared by UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office.

¹⁵² These are Albania, Armenia; Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan; Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

framework, were planning to carefully review the CCA document.¹⁵³ A UNDG global desk review of UNDAFs rolled out in 2015 found that most UNDAFs do build on the CCA but make limited reference to the methodology used and how the findings were integrated into the actual UNDAF.¹⁵⁴ The Europe and Central Asia UN Women RO's review of CCAs in the region found that most CCAs discussed the underlying/root causes of gender issues; some had a separate, detailed section highlighting underlying/root causes, while others made reference to long-standing patriarchal attitudes and norms that inhibit gender progress.¹⁵⁵ As with the UNDG desk review, however, the UN Women ECA RO found a similar inconsistency in using CCA to inform gender priorities in the UNDAF in the 12 UNDAFs reviewed. It is therefore important for UN Women to be vigilant and to ensure that sound gender analysis is done in the Common Country Assessment (CCA), carried over to the UNDAF, and considered in mid-term reviews and evaluations of UNDAF.¹⁵⁶

One positive example pertains to Albania. In 2015, the GTG, under the leadership of UN Women, contracted a team of consultants to prepare a Gender Position Paper for the next CCA conducted in that same year. The position paper contributed to a CCA document that addresses GEEW concerns by taking an underlying cause approach. The challenge now will be to ensure that the rigorous analysis is translated into the next Programme of Cooperation.

This raises several challenges for UN Women to ensure high level gender analysis is done, ensure it forms a pillar of the UNDAF, and ensure that it is monitored. The afore-mentioned regional training of trainers was directed at improving country teams to perform these tasks more effectively. And the PSG, in its recommendations to the ECA Regional UNDG on the UNDAF planning process, advised strengthening the quality of CCAs with specific gender analysis.¹⁵⁷

Joint programmes: Joint programmes have the potential to facilitate a more multi-dimensional approach to addressing gender inequality, but this does not appear to be a common approach or benefit of the joint programme modality. As noted in the 2013 Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System:

For gender particularly, the presence of multiple partners needs extra attention to building a shared vision for gender equality, ironing out differences and plotting the prioritized pathway towards transformational change. Many joint gender programmes fail to plan or implement for this from the start.”¹⁵⁸

In the joint programmes explored in the country case studies (as discussed in section 3.3.4 on joint programmes) there were some weaknesses in the design stage (lack of common/shared results) and implementation in silos with each agency addressing its own area of expertise, while missing opportunities to jointly identify and address underlying causes of inequality.

¹⁵³ Uzbekistan Gender Theme Group, Meeting Minutes, 27 October 2014.

¹⁵⁴ UNDG, Desk Review of UNDAFs Commencing in 2015, October 2015, p. 6

¹⁵⁵ UN Women (2016, February). Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia: Application of Twin-Track Approach of Gender in UNDAFs and CCAs to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, prepared by UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office.

¹⁵⁶ In the case of Kyrgyzstan, for example, the UN Women CO provided feedback on draft report of the UNDAF MTR and critiqued the contextual and gender analysis carried out in conducting that review.

¹⁵⁷ ECA UNW Regional Office, 2014 Annual Report, Progress Note Narrative.

¹⁵⁸ UN Women. “Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System: Final Synthesis Report,” November 2013.

Institutional dynamics

Given UN Women's mandate to try to influence the UN System, it is also within the scope of this evaluation to examine how the same principles of gender equality are being applied within the institutional framework of the UN. This raises the question of the existence of any gender-inequitable practices or behaviors.

As noted in Finding 3, there appear to be gaps at two levels: (a) between the intentions of UN agencies and their capacity for implementing GEEW commitments in practice; and (b) between their intentions and their political will or commitment to gender equality. Evidence from the four case studies (and virtual consultations) suggests that most UN entities operating in ECA countries have limited technical capacity/expertise for GEEW (and many UN entities have very small offices with limited staff in countries in the region).

There also appears to be a perception that political will to mainstream gender in UN programmes is sometimes lacking. This may also be related to the "deep structures" in the organization, which affect how individuals and the organization actually function.¹⁵⁹ One way in which such deep structures become apparent are differences in how different UN entities interpret and assign value to GEEW. Broadly speaking, for some individuals and entities GEEW is viewed as only one among five programming principles – Gender, Human Rights Based Approach, Environment Sustainability, Results-Based Management, and Capacity Development – while for others it is a core value that they 'live'. Interviews conducted at the country level suggest that often there is limited commitment to GEEW on the part of the Heads of Agencies. This in turn influences how far the respective entity can and will go in analyzing and addressing not only the most obvious gender equality issues, but also their underlying causes in relation to their external work as well as within the entity itself.

Also indicative of political will and commitment is the status and enabling of Gender Focal Points (GFP) in UN agencies. Other recent evaluations have raised concerns about the status (grade) and expertise of GFPs.¹⁶⁰ The UN-SWAP requires that GFPs in each entity have written Terms of Reference and that they are able to allocate at least 20 per cent of their time to work on gender equality. However, the GFPs who responded to the GTG survey indicate that these requirements are not met consistently across agencies. About 24 per cent of the GFPs surveyed in the ECA region indicate that they do not have ToRs, albeit an additional 43 per cent replied that this was not applicable.¹⁶¹ From the responses in the survey there are not huge concerns about whether GTG participants have sufficient decision-making authority within their organization to ensure implementation of the commitments they undertake in the GTG. However, as indicated in the ECA RO Questionnaire to GTGs in 2015, one Country Office, in articulating challenges to the GTG, remarked:

¹⁵⁹ An organization's norms, values, behaviour and practices are determined not so much by visible or direct power, but rather by the "deep structure" of organizations, i.e. "the hidden sites and processes of power and influence, the implicit culture, the informal values and systems of reward and recognition, all of which have enormous impact on how people and the organization actually function. Srilatha Batliwala. *Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation. Clearing the Conceptual Cloud*. 2011

¹⁶⁰ The 2015 evaluation of UN Women's normative support function refers to IANWGE and the fact that GFPs often do not have sufficient level of authority (p. 19) ; MCO evaluation p.55 notes "The evaluation observed that few of the current focal people in either the UN or governments are gender experts, and there is limited presence of grassroots feminism.

¹⁶¹ This observation is supported by the finding of the UN SWAP report 2015 that members are not sufficiently investing in gender architecture. Only 66 per cent of gender focal points have terms of reference in writing and only 47 per cent devote 20 per cent or more of their time to functions related to gender equality. UN, Report of the Secretary General. "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into All Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System," April 17, 2014, p. 9.

UN Agencies have to make sure that their gender focal points have relevant knowledge and experience from working on GE/WE and if not that they get a proper training. Work on GE/WE has to be taken seriously by the senior management.

One of the questions UN Women and the UN system need to address is the extent to which the UN system is able to correctly identify and address the underlying causes of inequality within its own agencies, as well as within the sectors and communities that it engages with in different ECA countries.

3.5 Organizational Efficiency

This section provides insight into the factors internal to UN Women that support or limit its ability to fulfill its coordination mandate. The criteria focus on the effects of organizational practices, systems and structure on the implementation of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate.

Finding 17: UN Women's effectiveness and efficiency in implementing its UN system coordination mandate have been largely constrained by resource factors.

UN Women's overall resource constraints are well known and have been noted by recent evaluations and assessments.¹⁶² In these studies, it has also been pointed out that UN Women has been able to achieve results despite this limitation, but that the organization is challenged to deliver "optimum" results in an effective and sustainable manner. Evidence deriving from surveyed and consulted UN Women staff and from document review suggests that limited financial and human resources pose constraints for implementing the entity's coordination mandate in the ECA region at both the country and regional level.

Country level

- Most of the 13 countries included in the portfolio analysis do not have a UN Women staff member dedicated to UN system coordination functions.¹⁶³ In M/COs, the UN system coordination mandate is part of the UN Women Representative's job, but the job descriptions reviewed do not specify the percentage of time to be allocated. In these offices, NOCs¹⁶⁴ often play an important role in different facets of coordination, depending on the country contexts, but these positions are not always funded by the Institutional Budget and the NOCs are also responsible for many aspects of programme management (including monitoring and reporting).
- The Gender Specialist positions funded by SIDA has enabled UN Women to strengthen its programme presence and UN system coordination role. Gender Specialist in Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia are supposed to dedicate 50% of their time to UN coordination, in addition to programmatic work. In Turkey, the Gender Specialist is dedicated 100% to UN system coordination and sits in the RC Office.

¹⁶² UN Women remains significantly below the annual \$500 million in voluntary contributions that was required to ensure a critical mass of resources at the time of its establishment (A/64/588 Comprehensive Proposal for the Composite Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). The evaluations and assessments documenting effects of the shortfalls include: Office of Internal Oversight Services. "Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)," June 2015; Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network. "Assessment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women): Synthesis Report," 2014.

¹⁶³ The exception is Turkey, where the main role of the Gender Specialist in the RCO in Turkey is UN system coordination.

¹⁶⁴ National Professional Officer, level C

- Staffing levels vary enormously across the different types of country offices. In countries where UN Women has only a programme presence, the number and seniority of UN Women staff is especially an issue for UN system

Example of Serbia, Programme Presence Model

In Serbia, there are two key staff members who take on most of the UN system coordination responsibilities in addition to programme management. The job description for the Gender Specialist position (a P-3) reporting to the RO includes duties related to coordination. However, this is one of five functions and it does not stipulate the proportion of time to be dedicated to each.¹⁶⁵ The Serbia team manages a programming portfolio of approximately US \$ 500,000. The multiple demands result in an intense workload.

coordination. This is partly due to the hierarchy inherent in the UN, where seniority often determines if you have a seat at the table. UN Women offices without full delegation of authority sometimes have limited status in the UNCT and their coordination efforts are dependent on the good will of the RC. The lack of staff and/or their level of expertise also has an effect on the credibility and reputation of the entity. As one respondent commented, *“When you raise an issue [in an inter-agency forum] you have to follow-up on that. You can't just talk about it and not follow-up.”* In one country, for example, UN Women staff made an effort to develop a roster of gender consultants, but could not update the roster due to lack of time. In programme presence countries the staffing is not stable, they are all dedicated to project work and there is no one filling the role of operations manager.

- Surveyed UN Women staff members feel that they do not always have time to undertake the UN system coordination tasks that are expected of them. Interviews also suggest that because of the demands of playing multiple roles in a country office, regardless of type of presence, there is more limited attention paid to defining a strategic approach to the UN system coordination mandate.

While the type of UN Women presence and the UN system coordination opportunities and challenges vary significantly across countries in the region, HQ expectations of UN Women offices appear to be the same. UN Women in each country is expected to carry out the composite mandate of UN Women, including UN system coordination, but with limited guidance on how to prioritize the different aspects of its mandate. In addition, UN Women staff members in each country (regardless of type of presence) face similar demands with regard to programme monitoring and reporting.

The size of UN Women offices (in terms of numbers and levels of staff, but also in terms of budget and the size and scope of programming activities) and the perceived quality of its staff also influence the entity’s reputation in the eyes of its partners, including other UN actors. As discussed in section 3.2.2, UN Women’s reputation is an important factor in its strategic positioning for carrying out its coordination mandate.

In several contexts, UN Women has been able to partly mitigate the effects of resource limitations on coordination efforts due to the personal strengths of individuals, including the soft skills that allow them to convene actors and build strong relationships despite challenging contexts. In some countries in the region, the small size of the country and facility of forming teams across UN entities on the basis of pre-existing social networks has also been mentioned by consulted stakeholders.

¹⁶⁵ The five functions are: (a) Provision of top quality advisory and programme development services; (b) Coordination, Programme and Technical support; (c) Management of programme and supervision of the Programme team; (d) Strategic partnerships and resource mobilization support; and (e) Advocacy support and knowledge building and management. UN Women Regional Office. “Job Description for Gender Specialist in Serbia,” n.d.

Regional Office

In the ECA Regional Office, activities associated with the UN system coordination mandate are distributed across different positions, some focused primarily at the regional level (such as the Regional Director, who is also the Representative to Turkey, covers the UNCT, and chairs the GTG) and others with both regional and country responsibilities (such as the Deputy Director and the Planning and Coordination Specialist). In addition, due to the RO location in Turkey, staff note that there is a tendency to support the Turkey office more than other offices.

In principle the Planning and Coordination Specialist dedicates approximately 40 per cent of her time to UN system coordination and 60 per cent to RBM and planning, which entails supporting UN women offices in planning, monitoring and reporting on results each year.¹⁶⁶ The Planning and Coordination Specialist is the main contact point for countries on coordination matters associated with UN processes (UNDAF, GTG, GE Scorecard, and training on gender mainstreaming). According to interviews, the greatest challenge for this position is the need to provide tailored guidance to UN Women offices without adequate support and practical guidance from HQ. The dedicated staff time in the RO is insufficient to develop the necessary guidance. While the RO can often draw on standardized materials from HQ for RBM guidance, there are few standardized materials that provide guidance on the coordination function. (See finding 20 below that expands on the issue of guidance.)

Finding 18: The roll out of the UN Women’s regional architecture had implications for UN Women’s capacity to strategically implement its mandate with regard to UN system coordination on GEEW.

In ECA, the implementation of the regional architecture took approximately two years. Sub-regional offices began to transition as early as 2012, but this was not complete until 2014. Although the Regional Office in Istanbul was not fully operational for much of 2014, it had to begin to provide the necessary oversight and operational management support to UN Women offices without Delegation of Authority (DoA). By the end of 2014, all of the planned DoA Country Offices had received their DoA. The time required to establish the ECA RO (more time than for other regions) made for a very challenging start-up phase for UN Women at the regional and country level.

Most UN Women offices that were consulted reported that it took a long time to establish the architecture and that this affected the capacity of UN Women to position itself and effectively implement its UN system coordination mandate at the country level. The focus on structure and “setting up” procedures meant that less time was spent on strategic planning and decision making. UN Women staff in one programme presence country mentioned problems such as duplicative reporting and loss of documents during the transition, which created a heavy work burden for them. Staff in one office that was particularly affected by the changes expressed dismay over a continuing onus of reporting requirements by the RO and not enough individualized support. Staff in several countries with UN Women programme presence complained of challenges to their efficiency during the transition.

Regional Office staff were also severely challenged during the transition and closure of the sub-regional offices, primarily due to the shortage of staff and increased responsibilities to follow up with offices transitioning to Delegation of Authority (such as Georgia, Moldova, BiH and Kazakhstan

¹⁶⁶ The time allocation is approximate. The job description does not specify how time is to be distributed across four main duties: (1) support to RD on UN programming and coordination at regional level, and in support to country level including the UNDAF, GTG, and other working groups; (2) support UN system partnership and alliance building at regional level; (3) support enhanced results-based planning, management and reporting practices at country level; (4) knowledge management and capacity building.

MCO). There was also a gap between the time that Bratislava that closed down in October/November 2013 and the establishment of the RO in Istanbul in January 2014. The RO was established with only 2 FTAs, the Regional Director and Operations Manager, and two staff members on detailed assignments. The portfolio of Bratislava was handed over but with all new staff coming in, it was difficult to give continuity. For a period of time, the RO staff operated out of temporary office space shared with UNFPA.

The architecture has also brought changes in the interactions between the field and HQ. UN Women offices in the region (all types of presence) now report to the Regional Office, and this has apparently reduced interaction between UN Women offices and HQ and puts pressures on the RO to provide guidance in many areas.

Other UN entities, for example in the Balkans, also commented on the effects of the restructuring. As one entity noted,

At the beginning of 2014 there was only the country representative and two programme staff. It took a full 2014 to get back on track, have available people, with the Istanbul office taking over firmly. DoA was a long transition as well. Staff had to become familiar and conversant with this status.¹⁶⁷

Finding 19: Another constraint for UN Women in the region is the inconsistent prioritizing of the coordination mandate relative to its normative and operational mandates. The unclear expectations from HQ and potentially contradictory incentives to support its coordination role have contributed to this.

UN Women (at all levels) frequently has to make decisions on what to focus on, what and whom to support through its coordination mandate, and what not to do. In addition, decisions must be made on how to balance the demands of a more operational role (i.e., especially related to managing programming on the ground), its role in the normative area, and its role in coordinating not only UN system, but often, broader groups of stakeholders in country.¹⁶⁸

Decisions on the extent to which UN system coordination is prioritized by UN Women offices in relation to other aspects of UN Women’s mandate is partly influenced by the availability of resources, the numbers and levels of available staff, and seed funding available.

At the same time, however UN Women does not yet have clear parameters for prioritization. The UN Women Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change describe what the Entity does in this area, but does not help to prioritize or provide operational clarity to the field, in particular with regards to how different types of UN Women offices (M/CO and Programme Presence) should prioritize the different components of the mandate. The UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 also provides broad statements about priorities in its impact areas, and for UN system coordination. With the introduction of Flagship Programming Initiatives, there is greater emphasis and focus on “substantive” coordination that clearly focuses on development results. Yet UN Women has been strongly involved in “process” coordination, which is more focused on institutional aspects and programming cycle of the UN system.

¹⁶⁷ As noted in the UN Women Bridge Plan for 2014, the lack of delegation of authority – despite strong capacity in the offices – was one of the legacy problems in the region.

¹⁶⁸ Several evaluations and assessments have noted the challenge of establishing synergies between these mandate areas such as the MOPAN assessment (MOPAN, 2014), UN Women meta synthesis of evaluations (2014), and the OIOS evaluation (2015)

At the field level, UN Women does not prioritize its UN system coordination mandate in its country programming plans. Activities and indicators for coordination within the UNCT would typically be reported in UN Women planning documents under OEE Output cluster 1 (aligned with the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017): “UN Women effectively leads, coordinates and promotes accountability for the implementation of gender equality commitments across the UN System.” As part of the portfolio analysis, the evaluation examined the extent to which the reporting on UN Women’s coordination mandate appeared in its annual work plans and strategic notes – inclusive of the role assigned to the Gender Theme Group. Considerable inconsistency was found in how countries report on and measure its coordination efforts under the OEE Output cluster 1. Some countries counted the number of joint programmes (Kazakhstan, BiH, Serbia) and number of GTG meetings or refer to the functioning of the GTG (Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia). Some also had an indicator on integrating gender equality in the UNDAF (BiH, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey). UN Women Georgia’s OEE on coordination also measured the number of UN resident agencies tracking and reporting allocation and expenditure using the gender marker, and UN agency satisfaction with UN Women’s leadership and coordination on gender.

There is limited reference to coordination activities in the DRF (which is the part of the plan that receives the most attention given the emphasis on development results), nor is there an overview of the UN Women office’s overall approach to the coordination mandate and UN Women intentions within the context of the UNCT in the narrative of the Strategic Note. Only in Albania, the Strategic Note for 2012-2013 refers to the need for more support from Headquarters in fundraising, visibility and corporate arrangements with other UN agencies and highlights the attention to be given to challenges in performing their coordination mandate and to UNDP’s role as service provider.¹⁶⁹

Another factor in this regard is the (implicit) prioritization by UN Women offices of programming over coordination related issues. This may be due to several factors, including the HQ expectation that offices will mobilize resources (usually linked to programming) and the pressure to improve programme delivery rates, particularly in 2013 and 2014. These organizational demands may run counter to the spirit of UN system coordination, leading to competition for resources among UN entities, in addition to the fact that coordination can be more time intensive (thus running counter to demands to execute resources quickly).

Budgets from UN Women core funds are relatively small for coordination activities, averaging \$10,000 a year, mostly for activities of the GTG.¹⁷⁰ The review of country documents also suggests that cost-sharing for the work of the GTG is still an inconsistent practice. Where data are available, work carried out by the GTGs is generally funded by UN Women.

As noted by interviewed staff both in country and in the RO, the lack of prioritization of UN coordination has also been influenced by what they perceive as competing messages and guidance that is often coming from HQ to the field. It may also be that intentions are communicated in one way, yet understood in the field in quite another way. One recent example is provided by the UN Women Flagship Programming Initiatives, a series of twelve high-impact, scalable programmes that build and supplement UN Women’s programming work. Designed at HQ, each initiative is based on a comprehensive TOC, which “articulates the causal linkages and actions required by national government, CSOs, UN, ODA and private partners in order to achieve transformative change in the lives of women and girls.”¹⁷¹ The initiatives provide a potential framework for joint work among UN

¹⁶⁹ See UN Women Strategic Note, 2012-2013, Albania.

¹⁷⁰ The Kazakhstan MCO budget for GTG meetings in 2014 was \$15,000. The exception among these countries is Turkey, where the budgeted amount for coordination is more substantial and includes both core resources and SIDA funding.

¹⁷¹ UN Women, Flagship Programming Initiatives, 2015

agencies. At the time of the case study visits in ECA region (September 2015), however, there were different interpretations of these programmes, and many saw them as opportunities to brand UN Women's work rather than opportunities to seek collective impact on gender inequality.

Finding 20: The ECA Regional Office is operationalizing its role in UN Women's regional architecture while trying to align expectations and resources.

The UN Women Regional Office is to some extent a bridge between HQ and UN Women offices in the ECA region, and articulates a Country Support role in its Strategic Note. According to stakeholders in UN Women offices (both from interviews and as illustrated in the UN Women staff survey results), the RO has not yet been able to provide sufficient support to UN Women offices to carry out the UN system coordination mandate, as discussed in section 3.2.3. At the same time, RO staff indicate that with current capacity, there is little more they can do to provide tailored guidance and that more assistance is required from HQ. The regional architecture was established, but the level of resourcing has not been commensurate with the multiple demands that it is expected to meet. A UN Women corporate evaluation focused on the Regional Architecture will provide additional insights on the strengths and limitations of the current arrangements for delivering on UN Women's composite mandate.

Thus, there is currently a vacuum of useful guidance and practical tools, from the country perspective, and limited capacity to respond to that, as well as lack of clarity with regard to where the responsibility lies for that (HQ or RO). For example, while the UN Women RO can draw on HQ for practical guidance and standardized training materials for its RBM/Planning work, there is no equivalent support provided with regards to UN system coordination. One positive initiative with regard to sharing knowledge and resources at the regional level is the establishment of Yammer, an online platform for knowledge sharing among GTGs in the region (including in non-presence countries). It was only created in mid-2015 so it is too soon to assess its effectiveness.

The UN Women RO has played a critical role in establishing a stronger gender architecture and overall UNDG programming coordination architecture for the region. Now, it must also meet the expectations of regional teams with regard to coordination on substantive issues at the regional level and sharing of good practices, among other areas.

4 Promising Practices and Lessons Learned

4.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this evaluation, we have identified what might be considered “promising practices.” These are relevant, well-conducted activities that were identified by interviewees, survey respondents, and/or the evaluation team that seem to reflect the kind of approaches that are considered to be successful in the literature on coordination/coordination theory or that reflect efforts to link coordination work to development results.

The lessons draw on empirical data of the evaluation including evidence gathered from GTGs by the ECA regional office in the first quarter 2013.

4.2 Promising Practices

Some of the promising practices are linked to specific countries, but others were provided by survey respondents and are not associated with a particular country. Some of the examples identified reflect an activity that is perhaps not as common across the countries reviewed.

Table 4:1 Promising Practices

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
Joint fundraising with other UN entities	UN Women in Kosovo, through the SGG, has helped to forge strong collaboration around issues of women, peace and security, to the extent that a cluster of UN entities has been able to jointly approach donors to raise funds, notably in the area of transitional justice.	Joint fundraising is a highly positive expression of coordination, especially when tied to a group of agencies with a shared vision.
Revitalizing and extending the GTG	UN Women realized that key actors were missing from GTG discussions. The Georgia extended GTG now has almost 50 members and several sub-working groups and meets quarterly. Because the UN is seen as a neutral system, other stakeholders welcomed the initiative. The GTG is perceived as a good mechanism not only for internal coordination, but also for policy level dialogue and advocacy with government partners.	The involvement of external stakeholders can help to challenge the UN and brings different perspectives on the analysis of inequalities.
Raising awareness about UN Women coordination mandate in UNCT	UN Women Georgia encountered initial resistance to its UN system coordination role among its peers in the UNCT. It organized information and training sessions for UNCT members, which included experts from UN Women HQ, to build a common understanding of UN Women’s role.	There is often misinformation among UN entities in the field that contributes to friction among entities. This approach leveraged support from HQ to provide a common message to all members of UNCT. The sessions were valued by UNCT members
Contributing to UNDAF monitoring group	In Kyrgyzstan, the UN Women CO is an active member of UNDAF monitoring group and was able to ensure more comprehensive treatment of GE and HRBA in the UNDAF MTR process.	Monitoring and evaluation functions are key to keeping the UN accountable for its GEEW commitments in the UNDAF. Participation in M&E

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
<p>Synthesizing and reporting on the GEEW work of the UN</p>	<p>The Gender Theme Group in Serbia, led by UN Women, developed Gender Briefs to capture what agencies were accomplishing, encourage knowledge sharing, and reduce duplication of efforts. The Briefs are available on UNCT Serbia website and are produced in the form of a newsletter every six months.</p>	<p>group is as important as participation in the preparation of the UNDAF.</p> <p>Such briefs can help to communicate the accomplishments of the UN, and illustrate the work of the GTG.</p>
<p>Preparing tailored analytical inputs for UNCT advocacy efforts</p>	<p>One survey respondent reported that the GTG in-country develops discussion papers on key issues. When reproductive rights in the country deteriorated, core members of the group produced a paper that was used by UNCT members in advocating for human rights.</p>	<p>GTG providing technical advisory services to UNCT and providing inputs to help ensure coherence – one message of UN.</p>
<p>Planning for joint support to government partners on the GE Agenda</p>	<p>Two survey respondents identified the role of the GTG in providing joint support to government: the GTG annual work plan includes joint efforts of different agencies and, where applicable, these reflect “discussion on joint support to be provided to government, when it is requested.”</p> <p>Another respondent commented that the “GTG successfully leads on the division of labour between UN entities in the provision of support to the national partners in the implementation of the GE agenda.”</p>	<p>GTG as a forum for planning and delivering joint UN support to government partners. Demonstrates how GTG can facilitate joined up efforts to strengthen capacity and provide policy advice to partners.</p>
<p>Carrying out joint advocacy to strengthen gender equality in political process</p>	<p>Several survey respondents noted that well-organized campaigns such as “16 days of Activism” eliminate risk of duplication.</p> <p>One survey respondent commented “Well-coordinated (internally with UN Agencies and externally with other groups from civil society) advocacy campaign and technical support provided to introduce temporary measures ensuring gender equality in political process.”</p>	<p>Demonstrates how GTG can facilitate joined up efforts for advocacy.</p>
<p>Pooled funds for joint gender equality programming</p>	<p>The Albania experience with the Joint Programme on Gender Equality (2007-2010) used a ‘pooled fund’ modality that was one of the key factors contributing to a strong model of coherence. In essence, the combination of strong coordination with the resourcing to back it, meant that the team was able to carry out its vision.</p>	<p>GTG members in Albania and in other countries have remarked on the value of having access to pooled funds. Funds made available to a team that is motivated and willing to work together towards a common goal can increase efficiencies and the effectiveness of their joint efforts.</p>

4.3 Lessons Learned

The following lessons emerged from the experience of countries in the ECA region.

- **Time and effort invested in sharing information and raising awareness about UN Women’s coordination mandate have helped establish the foundation for more collaborative efforts.** Representatives of other UN agencies noted the importance of UN Women clarifying its mandate and the implications for other entities; they value and appreciate UN Women COs such as Georgia that took the time to organize events with the UNCT to help others understand its coordination mandate.
- **Efforts to cultivate trust and build relations create enabling conditions for achieving more sustainable and effective coordination among institutions in the UN system.** This is demonstrated by examples in the ECA region countries and at regional level where UN Women has sought to establish relations with staff from other UN entities, that includes becoming familiar with the expertise, complementarities, and expectations of other entities.
- **UN agencies tend to be more open to UN Women’s coordination on GEEW when it relates to shared normative frameworks/guidance, rather than operational areas.** There are greater tensions with regard to coordination when UN Women is perceived to compete for resources in operational areas, or when it begins to work in areas where other agencies are seen as having the technical expertise. Other UN agencies tend to be supportive of UN Women taking a leading and/or coordinating role on general GEEW issues, and less supportive when such a role is seen as endangering their own (formal or informal) leadership claims in specific thematic areas.
- **UN entities are reluctant to accept UN Women as a coordinating entity when they perceive it as a competitor. They are more accepting of coordination from an advisor that is perceived as neutral.** Having a “neutral” gender advisor can be more acceptable to other UN entities than assigning the role of UN system coordination to a sister agency that also has an operational mandate and competes with other actors for GEEW-related resources. In countries where they have had the experience of having a GE advisor in the RCO, it may be harder for the system to adapt to UN Women’s role in this area.
- **Taking leadership for or coordinating the implementation of a normative/accountability framework is easily confused with having sole responsibility for implementation.** Clarity of roles and responsibilities is needed when an agency is coordinating the contributions (or joint actions) of other entities. To ensure joint accountability, individual and shared responsibilities (including for resource allocation) need to be clearly identified.

There is greater likelihood of GEEW ownership among GTG members when UN Women can take both a strong lead in drafting gender-related parts of UNDAF and in facilitating an interactive/cooperative process within GTG. These are key ingredients of success in implementing the “twin track” approach to gender equality in UNDAF or equivalent document in countries in the region.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This is the first strategic evaluation carried out by UN Women in the ECA Region. The conclusions were developed by the evaluation team based on the analysis of findings and are organized according to the evaluation criteria. Key findings that inform each conclusion are noted.¹⁷²

In reading the conclusions, a few key overriding contextual factors, both internal and external to UN Women in the ECA region, ought to be kept in mind:

- **UN Women:** The UN Women ECA Regional Office is new and in early stages of its evolution. As of December 2015, the UN Women RO has only been operational for about 1 year given that 2014 was year when the Office was finalizing the host country agreement with the government, establishing the office, and recruiting its staff – half of which had never worked in the UN system. UN Women offices in countries have had prior experiences as they often built on the work of the predecessor, UNIFEM.
- **UN system:** Recent reform efforts have been aimed at ensuring that the UN is fit for purpose in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There are still great hopes with regard to Delivering as One and the Standard Operating Procedures that have been introduced. Nonetheless, progress is uneven.
- **ECA region:** As in other regions with high numbers of MICs, the UN is trying to adjust in order to maintain its on-going relevance in the region. Its presence, especially in financial terms, is often overshadowed by the relative importance of the European Commission.

Relevance

Conclusion 1: The ECA Regional Office is positioned to play a strategic role in UN system coordination at the regional level. There are expectations for it to proactively lead an inclusive and collective effort on GEEW that draws on the strengths of all entities.

Based on findings: 4, 11

It is early in the life of the RO, and its first years were very much spent on establishing operating capacity in the region. Yet it has also played a key role at regional level through its effective contributions to the Peer Support Group and by leading or co-convening efforts to fill gaps not only in the gender architecture that supports both the R-UNDG and the RCM in the region, but also in the programming architecture of the R-UNDG. There is a shared recognition among UN entities consulted that GEEW coordination needs to be strengthened and that UN Women has a key role to play. Now that these groups are established, there are high expectations with regard to the kind of leadership that UN Women will provide in the future, and these expectations include issues of substance (focus on strategic issues) as well as process (adopting inclusive, transparent, participatory approaches to leading the different interagency groups).

Conclusion 2: UN Women offices have made visible efforts to clarify (internally and externally) the scope and nature of their UN system coordination mandate. Nevertheless, this mandate continues to be subject to a range of different interpretations and related expectations and these affect stakeholder perspectives on the relevance of UN Women's approach.

¹⁷² In some cases, the conclusion is informed by findings that are reported under other evaluation criteria.

Based on findings: 1, 2, 3

UN Women in the region has, for the most part, a multi-stakeholder approach to coordination that encompasses the specific roles of 'leading, coordinating, and promoting the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women'. This approach is relevant to the contexts in which UN Women is working in the region. Donors, government counterparts, and civil society organizations interviewed for the case studies value UN Women's coordination and convening of different stakeholder groups in the country on GEEW issues and also expect UN Women to fill that role. Donors in some countries expressed need for UN Women to play a stronger coordinating role in order to achieve greater coherence among the donor community in general and in resource mobilization efforts across UN agencies.

However, UN Women has not been able to consistently develop a relevant and strategic approach to working with entities in the UN system, due in part to factors internal to UN Women (resources, priorities) and also to factors in the UN system, including the extent to which other UN entities and even the UNRC understand and recognize UN Women's UN system coordination mandate. UN system stakeholders interpret and react to UN Women's UN coordination role in different ways and this appears to be closely linked to the importance that they give to the resources and expertise that UN Women brings to field and whether and how its coordination role is perceived to support or threaten the established territory, role(s) or reputation of their own agency.

Overlapping mandates and related competition over resources between UN Women and other UN agencies pose challenges to UN Women's UN coordination role, which, at the field level, is sometimes seen to be in conflict with its operational role. This is the case, for example, in the area of EVAW, where UN Women's mandate overlaps those of UNFPA and UNICEF. While this allows and challenges partners to work together, it also leads to friction.

In addition, UN Women's role in supporting gender mainstreaming across the UN system is not fully understood. Although UN Women at a global level has reiterated that each agency is responsible for its own gender mainstreaming processes and programming, there are still some countries in which there are numerous demands placed on UN Women to support individual agencies.

Effectiveness

Conclusion 3: UN Women's coordination efforts have contributed to strengthening the capacity of the UN system for addressing GEEW at country level. Making the link between activities associated with the UN coordination mandate and development results (for both the UN system as a whole and UN Women) is still a challenge.

Based on findings: 5, 9

The majority of UN Women's reported results on coordination in the region relate to efforts to strengthen the capacity of the UN system for gender mainstreaming. This reflects the prevailing internal and external realities:

- The particular dynamics in the region in this period: large number of UNDAFs being developed, generally small agency presence in each of the ECA countries (often with limited gender expertise and capacity) and the effect this has on the capacity of inter-agency groups such as the GTG
- The way in which UN Women's planning frameworks consider coordinated action as an Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEEF) activity rather than as something linked to results in its Development Results Framework (DRF).

Effective coordination is conceptualized as a means to ensure that the UN system is better able to deliver on GEEW-related results. However, until now, neither UN Women nor other UN entities have systematically tracked the specific effects of their coordination work on development results. This makes it difficult to systematically link achievements in UN system coordination with substantive changes on the ground.

Delivering as One countries provide an enabling environment for UN Women coordination in GEEW because of the common results frameworks that structure inter-agency operational work. But at the same time, siloing of UN entities in the implementation or delivery of planned joint results has been more the norm than a coordinated approach. Joint programming has not been as effective in engendering more coherence, synergy, and partnership amongst UN entities. The UN system's challenges in working jointly on programming also limit the actual and perceived value added of UN Women to the operational work that is taking place in the system.

Conclusion 4: UN Women has added value to the work of the UN system with regard to developing and implementing normative frameworks that strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment, and linking global initiatives to local needs/priorities.

Based on findings: 6, 14

UN Women has coordinated successful joint efforts to influence policy and engage in joint advocacy and campaigns, which help to create an enabling environment for GEEW in each country. This has often been achieved through the GTG, and joint work on advocacy/campaigns is often noted as the best examples of greater coherence and synergy among UN entities. In addition, the GTGs, under UN Women leadership, have prepared UNCT shadow reports for CEDAW and participated in other reviews for human rights treaty bodies. Beijing+20 reviews have also featured prominently in the normative support work of UN Women and the UN. At a country level, UN entities have collaborated for national consultations and in jointly supporting CSO representatives to attend global meetings, for example. Similarly, UN Women has coordinated with national gender mechanisms, CSOs, and GTGs (including extended) in introducing the gender dimension to the post-2015 national consultations and SDGs.

The main characteristics that have allowed UN Women to add value in and through its coordination function are its GEEW-focused and cross-sectoral mandate, its GEEW and thematic expertise and experience, and its extensive and diverse networks at country level. In addition, this role has often been played in areas where other UN system stakeholders did not have a prior or clearly distinguished role and thus UN Women was seen as a natural lead for these efforts.

Conclusion 5: Formal interagency fora or mechanisms such as the GTG are still crucial to ensuring coherence and reduced duplication on GEEW in the UN system, despite notable gaps in their capacity.

Based on finding: 8

In the ECA region, the GTG has been an effective forum for information exchange, for supporting efforts to strengthen capacity of the UN system (particularly through training), and for joint campaigns and advocacy. UN Women has begun to strengthen these mechanisms. However, GTGs still suffer from capacity gaps that are linked to the gender capacity of individual UN entities (e.g., the level of gender expertise and seniority of members of the GTG) as well as to operating features of the group (e.g., the challenges of developing realistic work plans, sharing costs among agencies, etc.).

Some GTGs have noted the dedication of a small core of truly active members who are challenged by time and resource constraints, given their workloads in their own agencies.

Conclusion 6: In the UN system, there are still important institutional barriers for accountability on GEEW commitments and this is reflected in the limited progress towards use of horizontal accountability mechanisms at the country level. UN Women faces persistent challenges in this area.

Based on findings: 2, 10

There is a comprehensive accountability framework for GEEW in the UN system comprising three mechanisms, one of which is the Gender Scorecard at the country level.¹⁷³ In several countries, UN Women has been successful in eliciting initial UNCT support for the adoption of shared planning and accountability mechanisms for GEEW. This has included promoting the use of the Gender Scorecard methodology in several countries (completed in four and foreseen in five others), but has also encompassed providing support for the development of gender mainstreaming strategies, and even encouraging adoption of thematic accountability frameworks such as the UN Secretary General’s 7-Point Action Plan on Gender Responsive Peacebuilding (in Kyrgyzstan).

Nonetheless, there have been challenges in ensuring the effective and consistent monitoring and implementation of these different types of mechanisms. This has been due in part to limited shared ownership of these mechanisms among UN agencies, reflected in: limited interest in them expressed by heads of agency, limited shared financing of such initiatives, and limited clarity between the individual entities and the shared responsibilities (including for resource allocation) in relation to ensuring joint accountability. Underlying this is the nature of institutional incentives in the UN and whether they encourage or motivate UN actors to seek and partake in coordinated efforts related to GEEW and in shared accountability standards at the country level.

Gender Equality and Human Rights

Conclusion 7: UN Women has not fully capitalized on its relationships with civil society organizations (especially women’s movements) in its coordination role within the UN system. There is potential to more fully leverage their voices in ways that could deepen gender analysis in UN planning and programming documents and ultimately help strengthen UN system accountability.

Based on findings: 15, 16

UN Women has been effective in developing multi-stakeholder platforms in many ECA countries and can draw on its network of civil society organizations, especially women’s movements. This network, however, does not appear to be leveraged in a way that could also enhance the UN Women mandate to keep the UN more “answerable” for its commitments on GEEW. There are promising examples of how UN Women can ensure that the women’s movements contribute to a stronger analysis of gender equality in planning stages (in CCA for example). The extended GTG has frequently served as the platform for more critical, external perspectives to emerge. But in some countries there are also missed opportunities to bridge the different groups and ensure more continued dialogue between UN and civil society groups and women’s movements. These efforts deserve to be strengthened in the future.

¹⁷³ The UN-SWAP is one of three inter-connecting mechanisms that comprise a comprehensive accountability framework for GEEW in the UN system. While the UN-SWAP’s focus is on corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the entity-level, the focus of the UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (Gender Scorecard) is on joint processes and institutional arrangements within the UNCT. The third mechanism, which is currently in the design phase, is intended to focus on gender equality development results at country and normative levels.

Organizational Efficiency

Conclusion 8: There is still a mismatch between UN Women’s broad mandate, stakeholder expectations of that mandate, and the resourcing of UN Women.

Based on findings: 17, 18, 19

Funding shortfalls influence the size, number, and status of country and regional offices; numbers and types of staffing in each office; and the nature and scope of (operational) programming. All factors affect UN Women’s available resources (people, time, money) to engage in UN coordination related efforts, and also its reputation and strategic positioning at country and regional levels. The latter is important in relation to the extent to which UN Women is seen to have relevant contributions to make that can benefit other UN actors.

But funding is not the only factor that has affected the implementation of its mandate. The optimal implementation has also been affected by the relative prioritizing that UN Women gives to this mandate area and the level and type of strategic direction and guidance that is provided by HQ. UN Women’s field offices face the continuous challenge of delivering on a broad mandate with few resources and few inputs about priorities and expectations. At the same time, since some of the limiting factors for the mandate are external (UN system – such as support of RC, openness of the UNCT), some of the limitations to implementing this mandate lie in the broader UN and require some direction from a more system-wide group such as the UNDG.

Tensions still lie in the balance between UN Women’s operational and coordination mandates and how synergies can be created between the two. This requires thoughtful and strategic resource allocation planning for all three dimensions of the UN Women mandate..

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations to UN Women Headquarters, UN Women Regional Office, Country Offices, and Programme Presence offices in the ECA region are based on the evaluation framework, the analysis that informed findings and conclusions, and discussions held with UN Women offices, Country Reference Groups, and UN Women Regional Office stakeholders. The recommendations try to take into account the roles and responsibilities of HQ and Regional Office, as well as the different types of presence that UN Women has in the region.¹⁷⁴ They also consider the overall challenges for coordination in the UN system and recognize that demands on UN Women resources at the regional and country level are ever growing.

The recommendations are intended to inform the review of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Since this evaluation took place during a time when some country programming Strategic Notes in the region were undergoing mid-term review, steps may have already been taken to address some of the issues raised. Finally, the recommendations include elements to inform UN Women’s internal discussions on how to leverage the UN system coordination mandate in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Recommendations for UN Women HQ

The Corporate Evaluation on UN Women’s Contribution to UN system Coordination on GEEW identified a series of recommendations addressed to UN Women’s Senior Management. In this

¹⁷⁴ There are no recommendations targeted at the MCO in Kazakhstan as it was the subject of a Multi-Country Portfolio Evaluation in 2015 that considered the UN system coordination mandate. The evaluation team endorses the first recommendation of that evaluation which was that UN Women give priority to the UN system coordination mandate to maximize the organization’s effectiveness.

regional evaluation, we highlight two key areas related to kind of support that is required at field level.

Recommendation 1: UN Women should provide operational guidance for UN Women staff on how to plan, implement and report on the Entity’s UN system coordination mandate in different geographic and thematic contexts.

- 1) Develop clear statements of organizational priorities and expectations of UN system coordination on GEEW for UN Women offices at both regional and country level.
 - a. Country level: UN Women should clarify expectations with regard to implementation of the UN coordination mandate given different types of scenarios faced by offices in the field. For example, it may be appropriate to identify “minimum expectations” for UN system coordination on GEEW and provide a tool box that countries can draw from depending on their needs. UN Women could also provide tailored guidance to the field based on clusters of countries according to parameters that affect coordination work (e.g., type of UN Women presence, UMIC/MIC, conflict/humanitarian, RC leadership, etc.)
 - b. Regional level: ROs play a critical role in translating and adapting guidance to the regional context. UN Women should clarify expectations of ROs and their UN system coordination role at regional level, especially with regard to RO support to UN coordination efforts in countries, taking into account the different types of country presence (for example, providing potential criteria for engagement in countries where UN Women is a non-resident agency).
 - c. Ensure coherence of messages coming from HQ in order to reduce effects of competing incentives in UN Women for resource mobilization to fund operational work versus UN coordination. Coherence of messages is also required with regards to communications with donors
- 2) Develop clear guidelines on communicating to other UN agencies about the nature of UN Women’s UN system coordination mandate (i.e., what does UN Women mean by this, so as not to be seen as taking over their work but trying to improve coherence in the system). In addition, this guidance should clarify UN Women’s practices of “working together” or “working on its own”, and the extent to which UN Women carries the banner of the UN versus its own banner.
- 3) Provide direction on how UN Women offices should plan and report on their efforts to deliver coordinated results on gender equality. Once the Theory of Change has been revised (to clarify how coordination is expected to facilitate development results), UN Women should provide additional guidance to the field on how to reflect coordination in their respective Strategic Notes and reports.
 - a. If UN Women wants its coordination work to link to development results, it will need to encourage this through its planning and reporting requirements. Recent improvements in the RMS in 2014 (with the addition of a specific question) are a step in the right direction, but reports from UN Women field offices do not always clearly identify the contributions made or how they were done jointly. As part of this, UN Women should encourage the development of theories of change at the country level, which could integrate the different components of the UN Women mandate.

- b. In light of the SDGs, UN Women should consider initiating a discussion with other entities on how the common approach to results-based planning can better support the integrative and collaborative approach that will be required to achieve the SDGs.¹⁷⁵ In addition UN Women should work with other UN entities to verify the assumed link between GEEW coordination/collaboration and improved development results, and also to contribute to learning on when and under what circumstances UN system or agency capacity for GEEW is translated into changes in behaviour and, in consequence, results. In this process, it may also be helpful to define different “levels” of results of UN system coordination, including notions of coherence, synergies, and reduced duplication.
- 4) Develop an easily accessible repository of resources that include the following types of requests from the field and from policy areas:
 - a. Standardized training materials on the twin-track approach to UNDAFs, accountability in UN system, gender mainstreaming in the SDGs and other materials used in UN coordination work on GEEW, which could be adapted to local contexts.
 - b. Systematic global and regional rosters of gender experts based on agreed criteria, which can be useful for UN Women and for other UN entities. (Some country offices and ROs do this on an ad hoc basis but there is no institutional approach. These rosters, and those of other entities such as the UN Staff College, should be known and readily accessible to UN Women staff in the field.
 - c. Specific examples of coordination mechanisms, “dos and don’ts” in the creation and management of inter-agency mechanisms (TOR, procedures), examples of MoUs, examples of agreements on standards of practice or operating relationships with other entities.
 - d. Good practices on substantive UN coordination on GEEW at both country and regional level, and that illustrate how UN coordination role links to normative and operational role.
 - e. Good practices in managing interagency coordination mechanisms, such as GTG and Results Groups on Gender.
- 5) Strengthen the feedback loop between the field and HQ on the evolving needs for guidance by ensuring systematic meetings, and if possible at least one face to face meeting, between Planning and Coordination Specialists in the RO and HQ.

Recommendation 2: UN Women should align the scope of the mandate to its resource base.

UN Women has faced constraints in funding its coordination role and setting priorities among the different dimensions of its composite mandate. Recognizing the limited funding base and that the Institutional Budget for UN Women may not be increased, resourcing the coordination role will require either: a) re-allocating or re-aligning existing core and IB resources, or b) better integrating financing for the coordination function in the Entity’s resource mobilization strategy, or c) reducing the scope of the mandate to align with current resource levels. This will require clearly

¹⁷⁵ We understand that UN Women cannot act on its own in this regard and is constrained by the agreed approach to RBM in UNDG.

communicating to Member States/Board of Directors the implications of underfunding for UN Women’s ability to cover all dimensions of UN system coordination on GEEW.

If it is decided that UN Women’s current scope should be maintained, then the resources to support that mandate in the field will need to be found or re-allocated. This could include:

- 1) Designating additional staff at HQ and ROs to focus on field level coordination issues both with a regional and a country perspective. This may require a realignment of resources to ensure coherence between the work that goes on in HQ and in the field. Given the huge demand for guidance in the Entity – where is the staff time going to come from?
- 2) Reviewing, based on additional evidence provided by the evaluation of the regional architecture, the types and distribution of staff positions in regions to ensure that they can support the coordination function. For example, in some regions Planning and Coordination (P&C) Specialists take on monitoring and reporting roles, yet in other regions there is a designated staff person for monitoring and reporting, which frees up time of the P&C Specialist that can be dedicated to translating guidance from headquarters, etc.
- 3) Creating pockets of seed money for engaging in UN system-wide coordination joint programming or joint action in order to create capacity to jumpstart initiatives and empower innovators.
- 4) Country contexts with complex coordination environments (that include peacekeeping missions or protracted humanitarian crises) require additional staff resources to fulfill coordination roles. Given that resource constraints limit the addition of IB posts at country level, HQ and RO could support COs in their efforts to raise non-core resources to fund positions to support coordination. At a minimum, it may be necessary to have a post that helps to fulfill Secretariat functions if that can free up others, including Representatives, to focus on strategic coordination.
- 5) Encouraging a move from processes to products that can be used and implemented by the system with a minimal workload for UN Women.
- 6) In addition, UN Women should explore other ways of integrating UN system coordination into its resource mobilization strategy. Flagship programmes, for example, could provide a key opportunity for promoting and funding coordinated efforts to address gender inequalities. UN Women could also encourage the development of pooled funding mechanisms at regional or country level (such as a “gender mainstreaming fund”) to facilitate joint work and support the UN system as a whole.
- 7) In aligning scope and resources, it will also be important to assess and define roles that are played by the different divisions and different levels of the organization. UNCD is referred to as the custodian of the organization’s strategy. For an organization-wide mandate, what does that mean? The expressed needs for information, tools, and guidance from different parts of the organization suggest that there is a key “knowledge hub” role to be played by HQ.

Recommendations for the UN Women ECA Regional Office

Recommendation 3: The UN Women ECA RO should continue to strengthen the strategic aspects of its UN system coordination at the regional level.

The ECA RO is positioned to play a more strategic role at regional level, given its leadership and co-leadership of several coordinating mechanisms. The Regional Director and her team should build on this foundation. Based on feedback from interviewees and survey respondents, there are several

things for the RO to consider in driving a more strategic approach to coordination. The following suggestions are relevant to UN Women's engagement with Regional Directors through the R-UNDG and the RCM, as well as its strategic discussions with individual entities.

Based on conclusion: 1,8

- 1) Through its convening of inter-agency groups, UN Women RO should play a proactive role in engaging and facilitating discussions on strategic issues and filling gaps in GEEW knowledge in the region. This would entail:
 - Engaging the members and stimulating dialogue around issues and substance (such as VAW, migration, political participation);
 - Assisting in filling identified gaps in GEEW knowledge and expertise in the region, for example through:
 - exchange of information on best practices in various areas
 - exchange of information on expert group meetings and conferences
 - exchange of experts in various areas of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming.
- 2) UN Women ECA RO should encourage joint communications, advocacy, and other initiatives at the regional level to help raise awareness of different issues. Although to date there has not been joint programming at regional level, stakeholders consulted appeared open to discussing joint efforts to fund projects of mutual interest.
- 3) UN Women ECA RO should continue to facilitate joint efforts to collect data on processes at country level (data on GTGs is one example, desk review of UNDAF and CCA is another) that can be used for decision making by regional inter-agency mechanisms (such as R-UNDG and RWGG) and to better orient technical support to countries.
- 4) UN Women ECA RO should continue high-level dialogue with key partner agencies in GEEW (UNFPA and UNDP) to enhance collective efforts and reduce duplication, particularly in areas of overlapping mandates or programming (such as GBV with UNFPA and WEE with UNDP). The regional partnership framework agreement that exists is a positive first step and a good practice. This kind of dialogue requires highest level of commitment, i.e., from Regional Directors and Principals.
- 5) At the regional level, the UN Women ECA RO can make several contributions to the 2030 agenda, depending on resources available. As a starting point, respondents identified a need for a well thought out and managed plan for coordination that could be shared with stakeholders. This could include: a) mapping of gender equality issues across SDGs and their interlinkages, b) participatory approach to mapping efforts in different sectors at different levels in the region to account for various dimensions of gender in the SDGs, c) working jointly to develop tools specific to the ECA region on GE entry points in all the SDG goals, d) bringing in external actors and experts on gender mainstreaming in different sectors to engage with UN colleagues, and e) leading and helping to manage the establishment of roles and complementarities on goals among agencies.
- 6) UN Women ECA RO should continue its outreach to donors in the region. Consulted donors want UN Women to play a greater role in UN system coordination, but are not always willing to fund coordinated work or support pooled funding arrangements that could be helpful in fostering collaboration across entities. In addition, donors often send mixed messages to UN entities. On the one hand, they want to see results that are linked to the work of an individual entity, and on the other they want a One UN. Donors could help by providing consistent messages to individual entities on the importance of coordination and the role of UN Women in coordination on GEEW. SIDA's support to cover the costs of

Gender Specialists in Programme Presence offices has strengthened UN Women’s capacity to play its UN system coordination role on GEEW. This is noted as a promising donor practice, and in the absence of additional IB and core resources, will be key to making such contributions in programme presence countries.

Recommendation 4: The UN Women ECA RO should enhance its support to countries on UN system coordination.

Based on conclusions: 2, 3, 7, 8

As noted in Recommendation 1, there is a need for additional and different kinds of guidance and technical support for UN Women offices in the field. The ability to provide such guidance and support is constrained by resources available to the Regional Office and/or by the nature of the guidance (e.g., some of it would need to be issued by HQ and/or the UNDG, and in that case the RO role would be to advocate for such guidance to be produced).

Nonetheless, the RO may want to consider:

- Continue efforts to document and share promising practices in UN system coordination, including from the GTGs and Results Groups on Gender in the region.
- Although coordination work is in principle to be funded by IB, in practice, there has been a need to mobilize alternative resources to support the UN system coordination role. It may be possible for UN Women RO to assist UN Women offices with resource mobilization in support of the coordination function in the field, particularly when focused on substantive coordination, by building it in to funding proposals; flagship programmes provide an opportunity for promoting and funding substantive coordination work.
- UN Women ECA RO should also encourage the development of pooled funding mechanisms at regional or country level (such as a “gender mainstreaming fund”) to facilitate joint work on GEEW and support the UN system as a whole. These pooled mechanisms should come with the additional resources that will be required to manage them.
- Encourage more strategic use of joint programmes on gender equality at country level, which can be used for coordination; share innovative models of joint programming at in which there is much more synergy in the actual implementation.

UN Women at Country Level

These recommendations are targeted at UN Women offices at the country level: the first one focuses on Country Offices and the second on Programme Presence offices.

Recommendation 5: UN Women COs in ECA should articulate an overall strategy and approach to GEEW coordination, including a clear strategy to influence and lead the UNCT on GEEW, coordinate the GTG, and enhance capacity of UN agencies to mainstream GE.

Based on conclusions: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

At country level, there is a need to align demands for UN Women’s support for UN system coordination and gender mainstreaming with the capacities of Country Offices. This will require reflection on how to ensure that coordination work is highly strategic and helps support the CO’s overall strategy.

- Overall strategy and approach to coordination: COs should articulate an overall strategy and approach to UN system coordination in the CO Strategic Note, while emphasizing how this coordination role can augment results in the identified impact areas. Resources to support this work should also be identified. The articulation of the coordination approach should also make reference to the strategy for the UNCT, as a key coordination mechanism at country level. It should further explain the importance of coordinating other external actors more broadly, if that is an integral part of the strategy.
- Continue to strengthen the GTG or Results Groups on Gender: While UN Women COs have already begun to strengthen these interagency groups, a sustained effort will be required to: clarify purpose of GTG; play a facilitating role as Chair; encourage shared ownership of the GTG and its products; shape realistic work plans for the GTG with joint products of clear added value to the UNCT and related to UNDAF results; and strengthen the capacity of members of the GTG. In addition, as GTGs transition to Results Groups in support of the new UNDAF, there is a need to ensure that some of the more important roles of GTGs (e.g., information exchange, joint advocacy, advice to UNCT, joint products such as CEDAW report) are also considered as part of those revised ToRs; consider Expanded GTGs that bring in key donors and CSOs (as long as they have a clear purpose).
- UNDAF cycles: UN Women's role in promoting the twin track approach to gender mainstreaming in the UNDAF is well established. UN Women COs should continue to enhance contribution to monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF; in addition, they should pay particular attention to CCAs to ensure that structural impediments to inequality are documented and that the UNCT designs strategic interventions that respond to these.
- Clarify approach to gender mainstreaming: COs should develop a clear and strategic approach to the provision of technical expertise to individual UN agencies to support gender mainstreaming.
- Resourcing coordination: COs note that resource constraints (financial and human) have limited their possibilities for playing a stronger coordination role. In the absence of additional UN Women institutional budget resources, COs should review current roles and responsibilities among existing staff and consider ways of including coordination roles and functions in their efforts to mobilize non-core resources.

Recommendation 6: UN Women programme presence offices in ECA should articulate strategic priorities for GEEW coordination within their overall mandate based on an assessment of the institutional environment, their own resource base, the donor environment, and the needs and opportunities within the country context.

Based on conclusions: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

UN Women has been able to make contributions to UN system coherence (especially through GTGs or similar inter-agency groups) and gender mainstreaming in countries where it has programme presence. These offices face particular resource constraints given that, in most cases, their limited staff are fully dedicated to managing programmes, staffing is more unstable, and the coordination function is added on to programme and operational tasks. Moreover, the programme presence model has no set definition and, as such, the arrangements and functions of each office can differ considerably. This makes it difficult to offer standard guidance for all programme presence offices.

The role of programme presence countries should be determined by HQ (as per Recommendation 1). However, in this recommendation the evaluation team offers suggested approaches for consideration of UN Women. UN Women programme presence offices should first assess what is

both feasible and strategic in their particular situation as the basis for a more explicit articulation of strategic priorities for their coordination work. Such assessments should seek to capture:

- The institutional environment of the UN system that reflects a solid understanding of the capacities, needs, and comparative advantages of other UN entities (similar to the mapping exercise conducted by UN Women Serbia). This should include an assessment of the opportunities and limitations that this environment presents to UN Women, and how receptive other actors are to its mandate and support.
- The resources – financial and human – made available to the office, as this can differ from one programme presence office to another.
- The GEEW needs of the country, which could help determine which impact areas to prioritize through coordinated efforts.
- The donor environment and an analysis of the broader network of stakeholders in the country.

These are just a few of the factors to consider in establishing a firm understanding of the possibilities and limitations of UN Women’s work in each particular context. To inform its strategic priorities, the office should also rationalize the proportional attention it may give initially to coordination, normative and operational work. This will require a discussion and agreement with the UN Women ECA Regional Office as well, before establishing a final set of strategic priorities, so that the RO can provide complementary support to the UN Women office and fill critical gaps.

Following the assessment and discussion with the RO, Programme Presence offices should:

- Establish clear and strategic priorities for UN system coordination and how these will support UN Women’s overall strategy in the country, including its broader remit to convene and mobilize a broad range of actors/multi-stakeholder approach in country.
- Make use of the GTG or Results Group on Gender for coordination purposes and provide a leadership role in specific areas agreed with the UNCT.
- Seek the support of the Resident Coordinator to engage the UNCT and ensure that GEEW activities also exist within the UNCT work plan.
- Where possible, build coordination resources into mobilization of non-core resources to support programming priorities.
- Continue to clarify UN Women’s UN system coordination mandate for other UN system actors in country, as well as the concrete roles that UN Women and other actors may play in coordinating on GEEW.