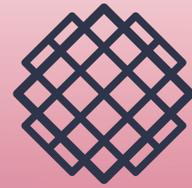




Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova
Republic of Kosovo



Zyra Kombëtare e Auditimit
Nacionalna Kancelarija Revizije
National Audit Office

Report on Performance Audit

GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FROM RURAL AREAS THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE LABOUR MARKET



Prishtina, March 2024



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Performance audits undertaken by the National Audit Office are objective and reliable examinations that assess whether government actions, systems, operations, programs, activities or organizations operate in accordance with the principles of economy³, efficiency⁴ and effectiveness⁵ and whether there is room for improvement.

The General Auditor has decided on the content of the performance audit report "Gender equality and empowerment of women from rural areas through their inclusion in the labor market", in consultation with the Assistant General Auditor, Myrvete Gashi Morina, who supervised the audit.

The audit team consisted of:

Ariana Gjonbalaj Shala, Director of the Audit Department

Ardiana Miftari, Team Leader

Ylfete Osmani, Team Member

Arlinda Mustafa, Team Member

ZYRA KOMBËTARE E AUDITIMIT - Address: Arbëria Neighbourhood, Str. Ahmet Krasniqi 210, Prishtina, 10000, Kosovo

Tel: +381(0) 38 60 60 04/1011

1 Law No. 05/L-055 on the Auditor General and the National Audit Office of the Republic of Kosovo.

2 Standards and guidelines for performance audit based on ONISA Audit Standards.

3 Economy – The principle of economy implies minimising the cost of inputs. Inputs should be available at the right time, quantity and quality and at the best price possible

4 The principle of efficiency implies achieving the maximum from the available inputs. It relates to the relationship between input and output in terms of quantity, quality and time

5 Effectiveness - The principle of effectiveness implies the achievement of set objectives and the achievement of expected outputs.

Table of content

Executive summary	1
1.Introduction.....	4
2.Audit objectives and questions.....	8
Audit questions	8
3.Audit findings.....	12
3.1.Evaluation of criteria, public information and monitoring of the grant program from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development.....	14
3.1.1. Selection criteria do not ensure the support of gender equality	14
3.1.2. Failure to inform women about Rural Development Programs.....	17
3.1.3. Shortcomings in the RDP monitoring process.....	19
3.2.Announcement of calls for applications, application review and grant control process by the Agency for Agricultural Development	20
3.2.1. Delay in announcing calls for applications	20
3.2.2. Registration and application review procedures do not sufficiently support the female gender	22
3.2.3. The increase in interest in some of the agricultural sectors did not increase the number of women beneficiaries.....	25
3.2.4. Conditioning of affirmative measures makes their purpose ineffective	27
3.2.5. Shortcomings in the process of controls of grant beneficiaries.....	30
3.3.Registration by the Employment Agency of jobseekers and training profiles for women in rural areas	34
3.3.1. There is a lack of data and professional training services disaggregated by urban and rural areas.....	34
4.Conclusions.....	38
5.Recommendations	42
Annex 1. Audit scope and methodology	46
Annex 2. Analyzes of criteria and number of beneficiary controls	48
Annex 3. Survey report	52
Annex 4. Confirmation letters and Response of the auditees.....	82

Acronyms

MA	Managing Authorities
EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
ADA	Agriculture Development Agency
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
ARDP	Agriculture and Rural Development Programme
KPGE	Kosovo Program for Gender Equality
LGE	Law on Gender Equality
RDP	Rural Development Program
IRDA	International Rural Development Agency
IPARD	International Program for Rural Development
CEG	Committee for Gender Equality
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers
KDI	Kosovo Democratic Institute
AI	Administrative Instruction
DATS	Department of Advisory and Technical Services
VTC	Vocational Training Centres

Executive summary

The National Audit Office has carried out the performance audit “Gender equality and empowerment of women from rural areas through their inclusion in the labour market”. The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness and impact of policies, programs and measures aimed at promoting the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labour market, with a focus on increasing their participation and identifying opportunities for improvement.

The focus of this audit was the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development as the responsible institution for drafting the Rural Development Program, the Agency for Agricultural Development as the institution responsible for implementing this program, and the Employment Agency as the institution responsible for the administration of the labour market and the implementation of employment and professional training policies in Kosovo. This audit covered the 2019-2023 period and focused on the impact of programs and measures for the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labour market.

The conclusion of the audit indicates that satisfactory results have not yet been achieved regarding empowerment of women and especially the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labour market. The Rural Development Programs, foreseen for the empowerment of women in the labour market, and the definition of affirmative measures for this purpose have not managed to ensure equal support for both genders. There is no systematic institutional assessment of project management on a gender basis or regarding the achievement of program goals from this perspective.

Programs for Rural Development have not been drafted and approved in time. All calls for applications for farmers and households during the period 2019-2022 were conducted in the second half of the year, while the announcement for 2023 was made at the end of this year. Delays in the drafting and approval of Programs have had a chain effect resulting on other delays as well, such as: delays in announcing calls for applications as well as in the selection of grant beneficiaries.

Current affirmative action measures are not effective in terms of supporting women in rural areas. The condition of three to five years as a land or business owner for the affirmative measures has rendered them ineffective as it restricts the participation or support of women and girls who have recently started their activity. Since ownership problems are significantly more pronounced in women, the non-implementation of the affirmative measure increases the number of women rejected. Likewise, the selection criteria do not ensure the participation and equal representation of female gender in the benefit of grants through the rural development program. Gender-based selection criteria are implicated by other criteria, negatively affecting the level of beneficiary women.

Shortcomings in monitoring and supervision for grant beneficiaries have been identified. The monitoring reports lack gender-disaggregated data and administrative procedures, the rotation of inspectors is not consistently carried out as it should, allowing issues such as non-application of criteria for or the opening of new jobs to not be verified as foreseen in the project.

The lack of a functional Monitoring Committee since 2014 and deficiencies in the process of appointing inspectors has thus resulted in a lack of data to reflect the results achieved or their impact on the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labour market.

Information gaps and communication barriers. Lack of gender-specific information on grant applicants contributes to policy-making barriers. Failure to inform women in rural areas regarding the possibility of benefiting from grants results in a low involvement level.

The employment agency does not have gender-disaggregated data, by urban and rural areas. The Employment Agency does not have a clear overview of the situation and needs of women from rural areas. The lack of these data creates uncertainty for interest groups in terms of recognizing needs and planning market expansion in favour of gender equality. While the failure to effectively communicate information, especially regarding vocational training for women farmers, limits their inclusion in the labour market.

Audit findings indicate that issues related to the impact of policies, programs and measures aimed at promoting the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labour market require improvement and 10 recommendations have been provided to this end. The list of recommendations is presented in Chapter 5 of this report.

Response of the auditees

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development and the Agriculture Development Agency have partially agreed with the audit findings and conclusions, these comments can be found in Annex IV, and committed to address all the recommendations given. The Labour Agency has also agreed with the audit findings and conclusions and committed to address all the recommendations given.

INTRODUCTION

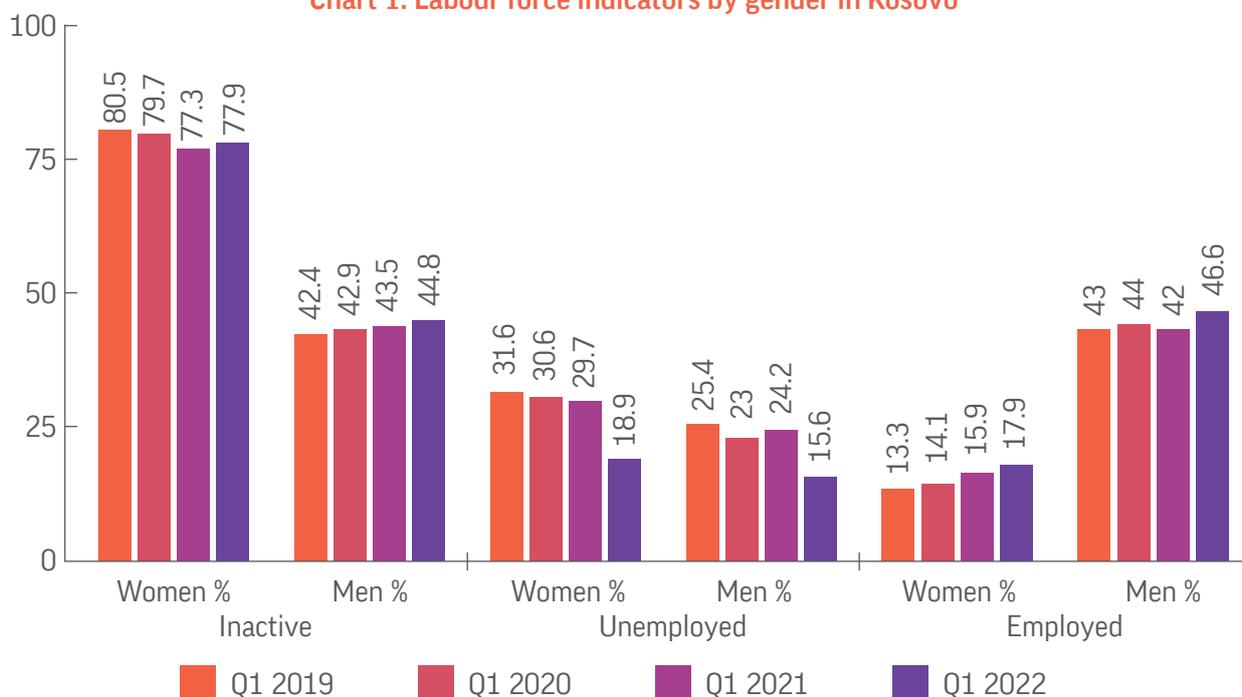
01

1. Introduction

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the country's democratic development, which has a key impact on the economic and social development of the society. In order to achieve gender equality, this right must be recognized by law and implemented in social, political, economic and cultural life. The principle of gender equality in the legal and institutional framework of our country is reflected in the Constitution of Kosovo, the Law on Gender Equality and other laws based on regional conventions such as the European Charter of Human Rights and the Council of Europe Convention against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, as well as the international convention on women's rights.⁶

Although in Kosovo the legal framework is quite advanced in terms of ensuring and guaranteeing gender equality, and that public policies have been approved by the Government, such as the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024 (hereinafter: KPGE), in practice gender equality still remains an unachieved standard, where women are underrepresented in many areas of society such as decision-making, employment and other social spheres. Women continue to be discriminated against in employment where their participation in the labour market continues to be the lowest compared to other countries in the region. According to the data of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics during the year 2022, the percentage of male employees was 47% while female employees were only 18%.⁷ In the following chart, we have presented the labour force indicators of the first quarters for the period 2019-2022 according to the data of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics.

Chart 1: Labour force indicators by gender in Kosovo



Source: Data obtained from KAS, Labour Force Survey Q1, 2019 2020, 2021 and 2022

6 Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women CEDAW

7 Labor Force Survey (LFS), Q1 2022

Although unemployment has continued to decline from 2019 to 2022, the labour market is characterized by a high degree of inactivity, which according to the chart indicates that 77% of women are not looking for work at all. The gap created among unemployed and inactive women in the labour market is due to the fact that they continue to face challenges arising from the society, but also as a result of the lack of institutional actions to prevent or change the situation. Improving the participation of women at the country level in the labour market should be a high priority not only in terms of equality, but also in terms of the positive economic impact for the country in general.

Women are under-represented in the agricultural sector due to the unregistered workforce, lack of ownership, low level of education and their lack of information/education⁸. The percentage of women in Kosovo who work in agriculture and agribusiness is approximately the same as that of men; however, the results of their work are not sufficiently evidenced, as their employment in this field is not formalized. Similar results have been presented in other reports, with special emphasis on women who live in rural areas, who are less likely to participate in the labour market compared to women living in urban areas.

The most important public intervention regarding development of rural businesses and economic diversification is the grant scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (hereinafter MAFRD). The MAFRD has drafted certain affirmative action/favourable policies for women in the program for agriculture and rural development to facilitate the employment of women from rural regions and their empowerment in agricultural businesses.

The table below presents data on the number of women beneficiaries and amount of budget allocated to funding their projects under the Rural Development Program (RDP) for the years 2019–2022.

Table 1: Number of beneficiaries and budget spent on projects contracted through the RDP for the period 2019-2022⁹

Year	Total number of beneficiaries	Number of grants awarded to women	Number of grants awarded to men	Total contracted budget for women and men	Budget contracted for women	Budget contracted for men
2019	499	216	283	16,433,590	7,395,115	9,038,474
2020/21	343	130	213	12,627,799	4,798,563	7,829,235
2022	495	145	350	24,163,827	7,249,148	16,914,678

Source: ADA, www.azhb-ks.net.

As shown in the table, in the total number of beneficiaries for grants allocated through the RDP, the number of females beneficiaries is lower compared to male beneficiaries. So that in 2019 there are 43% women beneficiaries, in 2020/21 about 38%, while in 2022 the number of women beneficiaries has dropped to about 30%.

These indicators show that the ministry's grants are having a low impact on reducing unemployment among rural women. Whereas, the Employment Agency has a decisive role in this regard.

⁸ Report of Kosovo Women Network

⁹ Summary report "Women in agriculture and rural activities" MAFRD

AUDIT OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

02

2. Audit objectives and questions

The objective of this audit is to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of policies, programs and measures aimed at promoting the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labour market, with a focus on increasing their participation and identifying opportunities for improvement.

This audit aims to provide recommendations for improving the system in the specific audit field.

Audit questions

In order to respond to the audit's objective, the following questions were asked:

1. *Have the competent institutions properly implemented the programs and have affirmative measures for rural development influenced the gender perspective?*
2. *Are the measures and programs monitored to assess their impact on the inclusion of rural women in the labour market, the achievement of gender equality, and women's empowerment?*

This audit covered the period 2019-2023 and focused on the impact of programs and measures to include women from rural areas in the labour market.

The audit was carried out in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFDR), the Agricultural Development Agency (ADA), and the Employment Agency (EARK), whereby the main focus was in the Agriculture and Rural Development Program, i.e. the two following measures:

- a. *Investments in physical assets in agricultural households – focusing on supporting investments in these sectors: fruits, vegetables (including potatoes), milk, meat, grapes and eggs.*
- a. *Farm diversification and business development - supporting a range of agricultural and non-agricultural activities through sectors such as: handicrafts, rural tourism development, honey production, non-timber products, aquaculture and poultry farming.*

The two measures were selected due to the fact that through them women farmers have priority in benefiting from investment grants and are scored with additional points.

This audit is directly related to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, and gender equality is one of the main topics of this agenda.

The audit was performed in parallel to the neighbouring countries and is based on the Cooperation Agreement between representatives of the State Audit Body of the Republic of North Macedonia,

the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution and the National Audit Office in Kosovo. The agreement is in accordance with the INTOSAI Guideline 9000, and is supported by United Nations Agency - UN Women.

The methodology and scope of the audit have been presented in Annex 1.

AUDIT FINDINGS

03

3. Audit findings

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (hereinafter MAFRD) prepares long-term and short-term policies by drafting strategic documents such as: Seven-year Draft-Program for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020, the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2022-2028, as well as the National Program for Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2023-2027.

One-year rural development is drafted based on these programs, wherein funding measures and sub-measures and budget planning must be defined.

The criteria for scoring the measures must be implemented based on concrete evaluation analyses and the administrative guide. The points for the selection criteria are determined for each sub-sector of the measures funded by the Ministry.¹⁰

The Ministry of Agriculture should define the evaluation framework by identifying performance indicators to evaluate the rural development program. The ministry must take all measures to provide women an equal and real opportunity to access and benefit from ministry funds through affirmative action¹¹, implementation of obligations provided for in the Law on Gender Equality¹² and KGEP as well as respecting the full rights of every individual¹³.

In order to promote and inform farmers and other stakeholders about the rural development program, every year the Managing Authority in cooperation with ADA should conduct information sessions, in order for farmers and the general public to be informed in due time.

MAFRD must design and update the monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of rural development policy documents.¹⁴

The public call for grants in rural areas, implementation and control of the projects is done by the Agricultural Development Agency, responsible for implementation of the rural development program. The agency announces a public call for applications for farmers and agricultural households. The public call for applications remains open for 30 days, or in some cases with the decision of the Minister for 45 days.

¹⁰ Administrative Instruction 2019, 2020, 2021

¹¹ According to the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, affirmative action means attaching higher points and equal opportunities for access and direct payments.

¹² Law on Gender Equality, Article 5 point 1.5. Inclusion of gender budgeting in all areas, as a necessary tool to guarantee that the principle of gender equality is respected in collecting, distribution and allocation of resources

¹³ Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2022-2028, point 5.4.4 Gender equality and social inclusion

¹⁴ Internal regulation, Article 11. Point 1.1

After publication of the call for applications, the task of ADA's departments is to receive documents through the online system according to measures and sectors announced in the public call. The Departments review the applications and verify the fulfilment of the criteria.¹⁵

In order to establish the real situation, ADA must perform three on-site audits, the first audit, the second audit and ex-post audit.

The Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo registers job seekers and provides professional training services. One of the main strategic objectives of the Public Employment Services of Kosovo is to reduce inactivity, increase employment, develop skills in accordance with labour market requirements, and improve labour market administration.

Women in rural areas responded to the audit report's questions via a survey conducted in Kosovo's seven regions. This survey was conducted on the basis of the Cooperation Agreement by the United Nations Agency, specifically the "UN Women" representative office in Kosovo. The survey sampled 400 women, and its findings have a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 4.89%. The sample is stratified by region and randomly selected (for more information, see the survey in Annex 3).

The purpose of the survey was: to measure women's engagement in the labour market, access to property, access to information on MAFRD's grants, application for MAFRD grants and their experience, and access to agricultural advisory services.

The sample of 400 women living in rural areas in Kosovo shows a proportional distribution according to the population of women in rural areas in the seven regions of Kosovo.

Figure.1. Respondents by region



¹⁵ Regulation on Rules and Procedures of ADA, 2012

The findings presented below are the result of analysing and evaluating the documentation, auditing the processes, testing, interviews with responsible officials in the field, and the survey. The collected evidence served to provide the conclusions presented in Chapter 4 as well as the recommendations for the improvement of the processes presented in Chapter 5.

3.1. Evaluation of criteria, public information and monitoring of the grant program from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development

This chapter includes the findings related to the evaluation of the criteria for the rural development program's measures and sub-measures, the way of distributing information to potential beneficiaries, and procedures and methods of monitoring the program to ensure that the implementation and results are in line with the goals of the program for rural development.

3.1.1. Selection criteria do not ensure the support of gender equality

The Ministry of Agriculture should define the evaluation framework by identifying performance indicators to evaluate the rural development program.¹⁶

Rural development programs are evaluated and monitored by the European Commission in accordance with the rules and procedures of the International Rural Development Agency (IPA).¹⁷ These evaluations are done in three phases; preliminary (ex-ante), medium term and final (ex-post) evaluations.¹⁸

It has been noted that two ex-ante and mid-term¹⁹ evaluations have been completed for the 2014-2020 MAFRD National Program and there was also an ex-ante evaluation document prepared for the strategic program 2023-2027.²⁰

16 MAFRD, Duties and responsibilities of the Department of Rural Development Policies (Managing Authority), Division for monitoring, evaluation and reporting for rural development.

17 EU Framework Agreement, 2015, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=10774>

18 Monitoring and Evaluation Manual, DMV

19 Ex post evaluation report 2013, Ex ante evaluation report 2014-2020, Mid term evaluation 2019

20 Ex ante evaluation report 2023

According to the mid-term evaluation report of the 2014-2020 program, the affirmative measures which are considered as socio-economic indicators should be implemented through the inclusion of age and gender criteria.²¹ It should be noted that according to the guidelines of the International Rural Development Program (IPARD), the selection criteria and evaluation points for each of the calls are allocated based on the proposal prepared by the Managing Authority and in cooperation with the IPA Agency.²²

If we refer to the annual RDPs and administrative instructions (hereinafter AI) we can see that the number of criteria has changed over the years.²³ The criteria have been removed or added as well as scored with different points depending on the programs and annual guideline. For changes in criteria, see Annex 2. (Table No. 12; Change in selection criteria and their scoring over the years).

The distribution of points has had an undeniable effect on both measures. In measure 1 "Investments in physical assets and economic development" the affirmative points are conditional on verification of ownership, while in measure 302/7 "Diversification of farms and business development", in some sectors there was a big difference in affirmative points for gender. We highlight that for the measure 302/7 the points have fluctuated to a great extent depending on the sectors, in some cases from 55 to 5 points. For example, the points foreseen for the handicrafts sector which are foreseen to advance the females over the years has changed and implied with the criterion "Farmer's experience" and "New applicant", (See Annex 2. Table 13. Change of criteria for measure 302/7).

21 MTE, <https://www.developmentaid.org/organizations/awards/view/204041/support-to-the-ministry-of-agriculture-forestry-and-rural-development-mafrd-to-evaluate-the-agricult> Annex 3, Themes and questions for focus group discussions, August 2019.

22 Programming guidelines IPARD III, page 3 Sectoral agreement for IPARD III

23 For Measure 1 "Investments in physical assets and economic development" 9 to 11 criteria were applied, while for Measure 302/7 "Diversification of farms and business development" 6 to 11 criteria were applied

To be more clear, we have reflected the affirmative action changes for both measures below.

Table 2: Changes in criteria in the annual rural development programs 2019-2023

Changing affirmative measures									
Measure 1- Investments in physical assets					Measure 7 - Farm diversification and business development				
Criterion	Maximum affirmative points and most interdependent criteria points				Criterion	Maximum affirmative points and most interdependent criteria points			
Years	2019	2020/21	2022	2023	Years	2019	2020/21	2022	2023
Gender of the farmer (Greenhouse & fruit tree sector)	2	2	2	2	Gender of farmer (Rural tourism/Honey processing/ Handicrafts)	2,2,55	2,2,10	5,5,5	5,10,5
New applicant (Greenhouse & fruit tree sector)			3	3	Age of the applicant (Rural Tourism/Honey Processing/ Handicrafts)	5,5,10	5,5,10	5,5,35-45	10,5,35-45
Land ownership (greenhouse & fruit tree sector)	3,10	3,10	3,10	3,10	Applicant's experience (Rural Tourism and Handicrafts - more than one year gets maximum points)	25-35,10-15	25-35,35-40	50-55,15	40-45,15

The chart above shows the changes in the affirmative measures, where socio-economic criteria are implicated by other criteria. For example: Women applicants under measure 1 “Investments in physical assets and economic development” will receive affirmative points only if they have owned land for the last three to five years. Female applicants in measure 302/7 “Diversification of farms and business development” receive points only if they prove three years of ownership in open businesses. This means that the affirmative points did not have an impact on the direct support of women.

Based on these facts, we can conclude that the programs and measures undertaken do not ensure the empowerment of women in rural areas.

Taking of measures by the ministry for conditioning the affirmative measure to avoid “artificial conditions”²⁴ has no real basis for the assessment. On the other hand, regardless of the gender of the applicant, grants are foreseen as financing of family businesses and agricultural projects can only be

²⁴ According to the RDP, the creation of artificial conditions means obtaining points in the name of gender, this represents fraud and is punished according to the legislation in force

managed by involving both genders. This means that the supervision or implementation of the project is more important than who manages the project.

The negative consequences of the constantly changing criteria and scoring procedures can be seen in two aspects: First, since in Kosovo the age of women involved in agriculture is mainly 45-55 years old, the benefit of points as a young farmer has stimulated youth but has excluded women farmers²⁵, because they do not enter the “young farmer” category. Second, women throughout Kosovo enjoy real estate ownership in only 17% of properties, and for agricultural lands this percentage barely reaches 4%, therefore conditioning the measure on real estate has excluded many more women than men.²⁶ Meanwhile, the reduction of affirmative points in some of the sectors of the measure 7/302 and in particular the handicrafts ones has increased the number of male beneficiaries that for the years 2019-2022 reaches the figure of 45-55% of the beneficiaries. This shows that even the sectors that are expected to help the inclusion of women in the labour market are clearly far from this goal.

It is worth noting that, according to the authorities, the conditioning of the affirmative measure with property ownership was intended to increase the number of women who have this right. According to the legislation, women have the right to property based on family ties and this enables them to use the right of co-ownership to apply for grants.²⁷ Based on our analysis, one of the reasons why women do not use this right may be their lack of information.

3.1.2. Failure to inform women about Rural Development Programs

The Ministry must ensure that information on the program, especially on the possibility of benefiting from the program’s measures, is provided to the general public and stakeholders. The Ministry should engage in the organization of meetings and public discussions with social and economic partners, the rural population, farmers’ associations and other relevant parties. It should also support farmers with training in specialized fields such as agriculture, legal issues, gender equality and rural development.²⁸

After the approval of the RDP by the Minister, and the announcement of the call for applications by the AAD, the Managing Authority in cooperation with the AAD holds information sessions in the seven regions of Kosovo.

²⁵ Gender analysis of the project, Vocational training and opportunities for generating income in agriculture for women and youth living in rural areas of Kosovo, August 2020 [https://iadk.org/Uploads/Documents/Pdf/AL/1008/Analiza%20Gjinore_Final\(Shqip\).pdf](https://iadk.org/Uploads/Documents/Pdf/AL/1008/Analiza%20Gjinore_Final(Shqip).pdf)

²⁶ Article, Non-formality affects women in agriculture Radio Evropa e lirë 2023 <https://www.evropaelire.org/a/joformaliteti-cenon-grate-ne-bujqesi-/32303973.html>

²⁷ Law on Inheritance, Ministry Regulations, Administrative Instructions, RDPs

²⁸ MAFRD, Duties and responsibilities of the Department of Rural Development Policies (Managing Authority), Department of Advisory and Technical Services <https://www.mbpzhr-ks.net/sq/departamenti-i-politikave-të-zhvillimit-rural-autoriteti-menaxhues>

Informing farmers to participate in these information sessions is done in coordination with regional directors of agriculture through personal and electronic announcements and invitations to farmers from the respective region, announcements in local media, brochures, posters, leaflets, etc.

Although the Managing Authority in cooperation with AAD takes all the necessary actions to inform farmers about holding information sessions on the RDP, the number of participants, especially women, is not satisfactory.

In the table below, we have presented the number of participants in the information sessions divided by gender.

The number of male/female participants in the information sessions



Source: Managing Authority, Reports of information sessions

From the table it can be observed that in the information sessions held in 2019 and 2022, the number of women is significantly lower compared to the number of men. In 2019, about 12% of the participants were women, while 88% were men. Whereas, in 2022, about 13% of the participants were women and 87% were men. The low participation of women may have occurred because the information sessions are held only during the period when calls for applications are announced, and regular meetings are not held with the target groups throughout the year. In 2020-2021, no information sessions were held, and the promotion of the program was done through the publication of the manual for farmers on the

website of the Ministry. As a means of communication and information, in addition to the web page, the social medium/Facebook was also used, where promotional and information posts were posted.²⁹ As for 2023, until the end of the execution phase of the audit, the entity has not conducted information sessions. The announcement of the call for applications was made at the end of the year. Conveying information to women in rural areas would help increase their interest in applying and this would affect the increase in employment through grants.

Among the respondents, 34.8% of women are aware of the agricultural counselling provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD). On the other hand, 65.3% of respondents are not aware of them.

The low number of women participants in the information sessions organized by the Managing Authority in cooperation with the AAD, occurred due to the lack of meetings, discussions, or finding other more advanced ways to convey information to all women from the rural areas. Whereas, the non-holding of information sessions during the 2020-2021 period occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The non-participation of women from rural areas in the information sessions may affect that many female farmers do not have complete information about the opportunities to benefit from grants from the MAFRD, through the RDP. Also, this can affect women from rural areas not being able to be included in the labour market.

3.1.3. Shortcomings in the RDP monitoring process

The monitoring division should monitor and prepare reports on the implementation of policies/strategies on rural development.³⁰ The monitoring committee, through the monitoring reports drawn up by the monitoring division, reviews the progress towards achieving the goals, the achievement of the planned outputs and results, the evaluation, examines the findings and conclusions, etc.

During the analysis of the annual monitoring reports of the quality of the implementation of the RDPs, we noticed that the reports contain different analyses based on activity indicators, financial indicators as well as output indicators (applications/rejections and contracts). All the information related to the results of the measurement of the indicators in the reports are presented in total values according to the measures, sectors and sub-sectors (sub-measures), but they are not divided according to gender even though the strategic objective of the RDPs is to support women entrepreneurs. The monitoring report also contains other analyses of the performance indicators of the quality of the implementation of Rural Development projects where data are presented for the indicator of new jobs, but the assessment of this indicator is not divided by gender. Monitoring reports are important because they must provide data

²⁹ The 2020-2021 RDP implementation quality monitoring report

³⁰ Regulation no. 37/2013 on internal organization and systematization of jobs in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Article 11, point 1.1-2

on the progress achieved in the implementation of measures related to the achievement of program objectives.

The reason for not performing such analyses by gender was the lack of indicators in the Information Technology (hereinafter IT) monitoring system through which the data on grant beneficiaries and reports received from AAD were monitored and analysed. We must emphasize that due to the lack of other relevant indicators in the IT system, they have also been identified in the monitoring reports. Also, all the monitoring reports of the monitoring division are only in draft form and not even approved, in the absence of the Monitoring Committee as a supervisory body for the monitoring of RDPs, which has not been functioning since 2014. We have to emphasize that with the approval of the five-year agricultural program 2023-2027, draft work regulation of the Monitoring Committee has been drawn up³¹, which is currently in the stage of public review.

In the absence of detailed analyses of performance indicators separated by gender, the monitoring reports do not provide adequate information for stakeholders regarding the achievement of objectives according to the purpose of RDP measures, as it is emphasized that priority will be given to projects carried out in mountainous areas, proposed by women entrepreneurs, young farmers and projects that will create new jobs in rural areas. The non-operationalization of the monitoring committee has caused that the monitoring reports of the RDPs are not further processed and approved.

3.2. Announcement of calls for applications, application review and grant control process by the Agency for Agricultural Development

In this chapter, findings related to delays in the process of announcing calls for applications, non-registration of applicants according to gender, as well as application review procedures that create unequal conditions for the female gender, are presented. The increase in interest in the field of agriculture has not brought a proportional increase in the number of women beneficiaries. The affirmative measures that have been taken have failed to produce the desired effect in improving gender equality. Also, there are shortcomings in the control process of grant beneficiaries.

3.2.1. Delay in announcing calls for applications

In support of the implementation of the annual program for rural development, the Agency for Agricultural Development announces calls for applications for farmers and households. The annual programs for rural development as well as the announcement of calls for applications must be made in a timely manner.

³¹ Draft Rules of Procedure for the Monitoring Committee 2023-2027

Although one of the main goals of the allocation of grants is: increasing production and productivity, diversifying activities in farms and rural businesses, creating new jobs, announcements of calls for applications for farmers and households have been with delay. All calls for applications for farmers and households during the period 2019-2022 were made in the second half of the year, while the announcement for 2023 was made at the end of this year³², and not in accordance with seasonal work or in adaptation to climate conditions.

The public call for applications remains open for 30 days or in some cases with the decision of the Minister for 45 days.

In the following table, the time of drafting and approval of RDPs, drafting of AI as well as calls for applications for the period 2019-2023 is presented.

Table.4. Drafting and approval of RDPs, drafting of AI and calls for applications, for the period 2019-2023

Year	Follow-up the RDP for approval	Approval of the RDP	AI for the implementation of the RDP	Announcement of calls for applications
2019	01.11.2018	23.04.2019	21.05.2019	22.05.-01.07.2019 01.07.-12.07.2019
2020/21	26.02.2020	19.06.2020	17.07.2020	20.07.-20.08.2020 30.01.- 01.03.2021
2022	04.03.2022	10.06.2022	22.06.2022	07.07.-08.08.2022 08.08.-15.08.2022
2023	22.12.2022	30.08.2023	19.10.2023	31.10. - 29.11.2023

Source: Data obtained from the Managing Authority

The table shows that after the drafting of the RDP, the program approval process lasts from 3 to 8 months. The 2019 program was drafted up on time, while during the 2020-2023 period, all Rural Development Programs were drafted and especially approved late.

Although in 2023, the Law on Agriculture was changed, which stipulates that the minister must approve the annual program no later than fifteen (15) days from the approval of the budget for the relevant year, the annual program in the same year was approved by eight (8) months late.³³

These delays have also caused delays in the announcement of calls for applications, which has affected farmers' losses in time and material costs, especially when it comes to projects that can only be developed during certain periods of time within the year.

³² Calls for applications for farmers and households, 2019-2023.

³³ LAW NO. 08/L-072 ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, Article 8

3.2.2. Registration and application review procedures do not sufficiently support the female gender

AAD must register applicants by gender. The AAD should also verify compliance with eligibility criteria and the impact of affirmative measures on gender equality.³⁴

AAD, as the implementing authority of the program for rural development, during the registration of applicants in the system, only makes a general registration of them. Regarding the gender aspect, AAD only has data on the number of beneficiaries by gender and not of the number of applicants.

The recording of data separated by gender is important so that the Ministry has a clear overview of the interest of women from rural areas in developing their activity through funding via grants, and then based on these statistics to draft policies as well as define criteria on gender bases.

In the light of the review of received applications, AAD verifies the fulfillment of the eligibility criteria, which means the completion of the file with all the required documents, and review the accuracy of the business plan. It then checks the documentation to verify the fulfillment of the selection criteria.

During the verification of the fulfillment of the eligibility criteria, we noticed that a significant number are rejected due to the non-fulfillment of this criterion. To get to know this process more closely, we have tested samples and the results of this testing are presented below:

Table 5: Application review procedures/rejected cases

	Gender	Has met the eligibility criteria	Scoring of the selection criteria	Initiation of appeal procedures	Beneficiary after appeal procedures
R1	F	Yes	88	Yes	Yes
R2	F	No	/	Yes	/
R3	F	No	/	/	/
R4	F	No	/	/	/
R5	F	Yes	77	/	/
R6	F	No	100	/	/
R7	F	Jo	/	/	/

Source: Data from AAD files; rejected applicants

³⁴ Program for rural development 2022, Ex-post controls, pg. 12

As it can be seen from the data presented in the table above, of the seven rejected cases, four of them were rejected due to the eligibility criteria. Three of these cases were rejected due to the incorrect compilation of the business plan, and the same did not present a complaint, while only one case initiated appeal procedures. We have also confirmed that one of the cases (the first case scored for the selection criterion) was returned for review through appeal procedures and after that resulted in acceptance as a beneficiary. In the case of the female applicant scoring 77 points, she failed to be a beneficiary of the grant, because the beneficiaries were declared those who scored 80 points and higher. It is worth noting that the same applicant failed to initiate appeal procedures. While in the other case where the female applicant scored 100 points, she was declared the beneficiary of the grant and signed a contract with AAD. In the meantime, since she failed to implement the project, no payment has been made by AAD. Therefore, this case has been added to the list of rejected candidates.

However, in addition to testing applications for eligibility, we have also confirmed that all shortlisted applications that pass the selection process must undergo a second review. Applicants are scored according to the fulfillment of the selection criteria, then the selection of the beneficiaries is done by the electronic system. Therefore, the electronic system automatically ranks the candidates according to the accumulated scores for fulfilling the selection criteria. For example, in cases where they have equal points, priority to benefit from the grant is always given to the candidate who applied first, regardless of meeting the criteria, let alone gender. This rule was initiated with the national program for the development of rural areas 2014-2020, and is still practiced.

Based on all these facts, we conclude that the application review procedures are not favorable for gender equality. Rejection of candidates occurs for technical reasons; non-compliance of the amounts of the business plan or failure to fill in the forms properly, and that there are cases when through the appeal process it is proven that the rejection was unreasonable. While in cases where female candidates meet the selection criteria but have equal points with other candidates, they are again subject to the risk of being rejected due to the selection made by the electronic system based on the time when the applicants posted the application.

AAD does not review all appeal cases on the grounds that the documents were incomplete and the business plan was incorrect. On the other side, the electronic system makes an automatic selection of applicants based on the time when the application arrives, without considering gender preference.

A comparative analysis of women / men beneficiaries is presented in the following table:

Table 6: Comparative data, women/men beneficiary ratio for sub-sectors of measure 1; Investments in physical assets of agricultural economies:

Year of application	Warehouse		Greenhouse		Milk collection		Cow milk processing		Processing of sheep and goat milk		Pig farming		Cattle farming		Poultry cultivation		Wine-growing		Fruit trees		Berry trees		Walnut trees	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
2019	6	7	55	35	0	3	8	24	0	10	2	5	12	33	2	5	4	8	24	43	/	/	/	/
2020/21	/	/	43	63	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	15	44	/	/	7	17
2022	12	21	2	7	0	2	4	27	0	6	0	4	4	35	3	12	5	13	14	38	3	14	9	20
Total	18	28	100	105	0	5	12	51	0	16	2	9	16	68	5	17	9	21	53	125	3	14	16	37

Source: Data from the Rural Development Agency, Lists of sectors of Measure 1 for 2019-2022

According to the data presented in the table, it is observed that the beneficiary women are significantly lower in number compared to men in the eleven sectors of agriculture within measure 1 “Investments in physical assets and households”.

Based on the survey conducted regarding the application, out of the total number of 400 women, 12% of respondents (or their family members) applied for these grants, while the majority (88%) did not. Respondents who applied for grants, the reasons for the rejection of the grant vary. A significant proportion (30.6%) reported that they were not given a specific reason for the refusal. About 22.2% indicated that the land was not registered in their name or in their family’s name, while 33.3% mentioned failure to meet the criteria, such as the lack of land, documentation or water resources. A smaller percentage, 5.6%, expressed the belief that the grants were not distributed fairly. Additionally, 8.3% cited other reasons for refusal.

Challenges in grant applications include unclear rejections (without giving reasons) (30.6%), unregistered land (22.2%) and failure to meet criteria (33.3%).

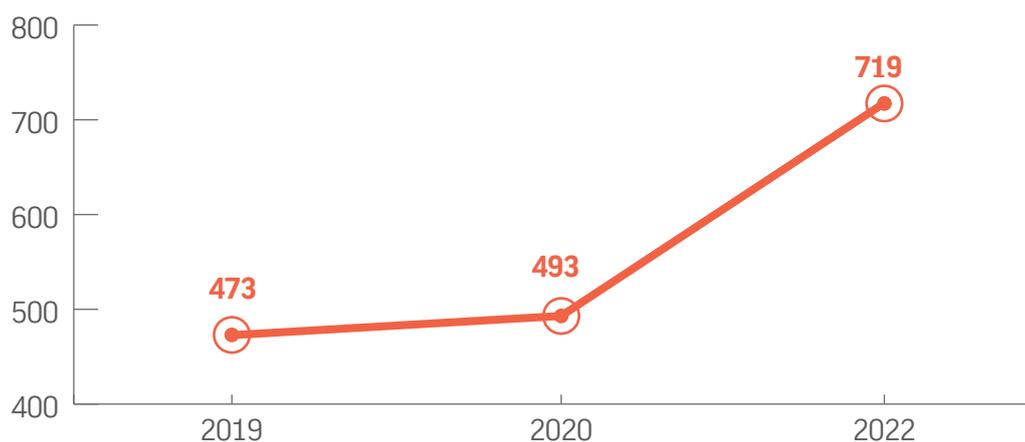
As a result of the rejection of the applicants, women beneficiaries are significantly lower in number compared to men in the eleven agricultural sectors within measure 1 “Investments in physical assets and households”. This unequal ratio is visible especially in the sector of greenhouses and orchards as activities where women have expressed more interest. Due to this, the objective for alleviating women’s unemployment has not been achieved at a possible level and in the areas where these activities have had the opportunity to develop.

3.2.3. The increase in interest in some of the agricultural sectors did not increase the number of women beneficiaries

The AAD must verify compliance with eligibility criteria and the impact of affirmative measures on gender equality. One of the objectives of the RDP is to improve the quality of life, community development and social inclusion in rural areas.³⁵

We have noticed that during the audit period, the number of interested persons belonging to the female gender for the grants of the measure “Investments in physical assets in agricultural holdings” has been constantly increasing. This is proven by the overview of the data presented below, which shows a proportional increase from year to year.

Diagram 1: Development trend of women applicants for the measure: “Investments in physical assets in agricultural holdings”, period 2019-2022



As can be seen in the diagram, the interest growth trend in 2020/21 was relatively higher than in the previous year 2019, even though due to the pandemic not all sectors of this measure were funded,³⁶ while in 2022, this level has almost doubled compared to 2019.

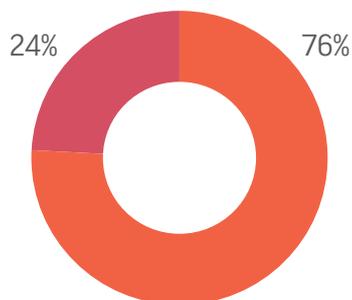
It has also been observed that despite the increase in the number of applicants, the level of female beneficiaries has decreased, as can be seen in the comparative analysis between the applicant/beneficiary ratio.

³⁵ Rural development program 2022, the main objectives of the RDP

³⁶ The sectors financed in 2020/21 are greenhouses, berries and fruit trees

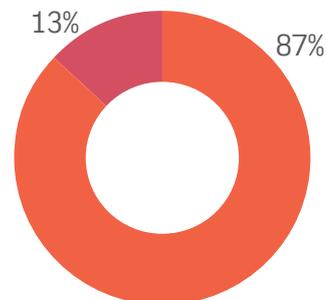
Chart 2: Ratio of female applicants/beneficiaries 2019-2022

Percentage of women beneficiaries compared to the number of women applicants in 2019



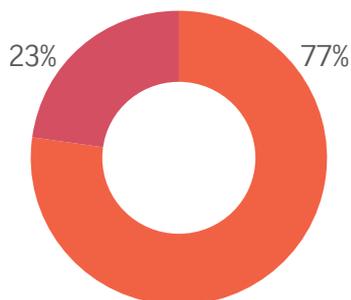
Applicants Beneficiaries

Percentage of women beneficiaries compared to the number of women applicants in 2020/21



Applicants Beneficiaries

Percentage of women beneficiaries compared to the number of women applicants in 2022



Applicants Beneficiaries

Data: Lists of applicants 2020-2023, AAD

As can be seen from the diagram, the high level of female applicants is inversely related to the level of beneficiaries. This makes us to understand that as far as investments in physical assets are concerned, the applied selection procedures failed to advance the inclusion and engagement of women in these sectors. It is worth noting that due to the pandemic period, during 2020/21, the decrease of beneficiaries compared to applicants is even higher. In this period, the call was opened only for three sectors; orchards, greenhouses and berries. However, the number of female beneficiaries continued to be low compared to the number of applicants in the following year as well. This shows that their rejection was from 76-87% of the total number of female applicants.

The cause of this non-proportional development between applicants and beneficiaries included conditions with ownership, the age of the farmer and other measures taken in the criteria immediately after 2019. For a certain period of time, we can say that this phenomenon has been influenced by the pandemic due to which the sectors of this measure have been reduced to only three. However, this phenomenon

continued to appear in the following year 2022, during which the conditions were tightened and some criteria were changed³⁷.

According to the authorities, these decisions were taken to prevent the creation of artificial conditions, in the sense of avoiding candidates who apply only to benefit from affirmative points and do not engage in project management. However, this could not be proven by AAD with reports that document the creation of these conditions or that the projects are not managed by women beneficiaries.

As a consequence, a large number of interested women, who have expressed interest in a certain sector such as fruit and vegetable processing, have been overlooked. It is worth noting that even the authorities know that women see the sectors involving greenhouses and orchards as a good opportunity for their inclusion in the labor market.

3.2.4. Conditioning of affirmative measures makes their purpose ineffective

AAD must verify compliance with eligibility criteria and the impact of affirmative measures on gender equality.³⁸

According to the Rural Development program 2014-2020, the selection criteria are determined by the minimum and maximum points according to the preliminary analysis.³⁹ The gender criterion, namely the affirmative points⁴⁰ for this purpose, have been applied since 2014 as a socio-economic measure to fulfil the principle of all inclusion and gender equality.

These affirmative points have continued to be applied as affirmative standards even during the 2019-23 audit period.

However, in the meantime, there have been changes in terms of the new conditional principles with three to five years as a land or business owner as well as the age of the farmer which, according to the authorities, were undertaken due to the creation of artificial conditions.⁴¹ As the authorities point out, most of the projects on behalf of women have been managed by men, however, we have found that the data provided about grant beneficiaries does not provide a comparative overview of who and how these projects are managed.

37 More specifically, for the sub-sectors "Building greenhouses" and "Arboriculture; orchard / berrie" there were changes in criteria such as; during 2019-2023, the new criterion "New applicant" (under the age of 40) and "Investments in mountainous areas" was introduced.

38 Rural Development Program 2022, Ex-post inspections, pg. 12

39 Agriculture and Rural Development Program 2014-2020

40 Favorable policies/affirmative measures for women, with the aim of empowering women in agricultural - rural businesses.

41 Creation of artificial conditions to obtain points constitutes fraud and will be punished according to Article 38A, sub-sub-paragraph, 1.2.3 of Law No. 04/L-090 on amending and supplementing the Law No. 03/L-098 on Agriculture and Rural Development. (ARDP 2020/21, Page 35)

Analyses of audit samples indicate a weak effect of affirmative measures, and there were cases when this measure was not implemented at all. Below we have shown the implementation of the affirmative measure in seven cases of examination of beneficiary files:

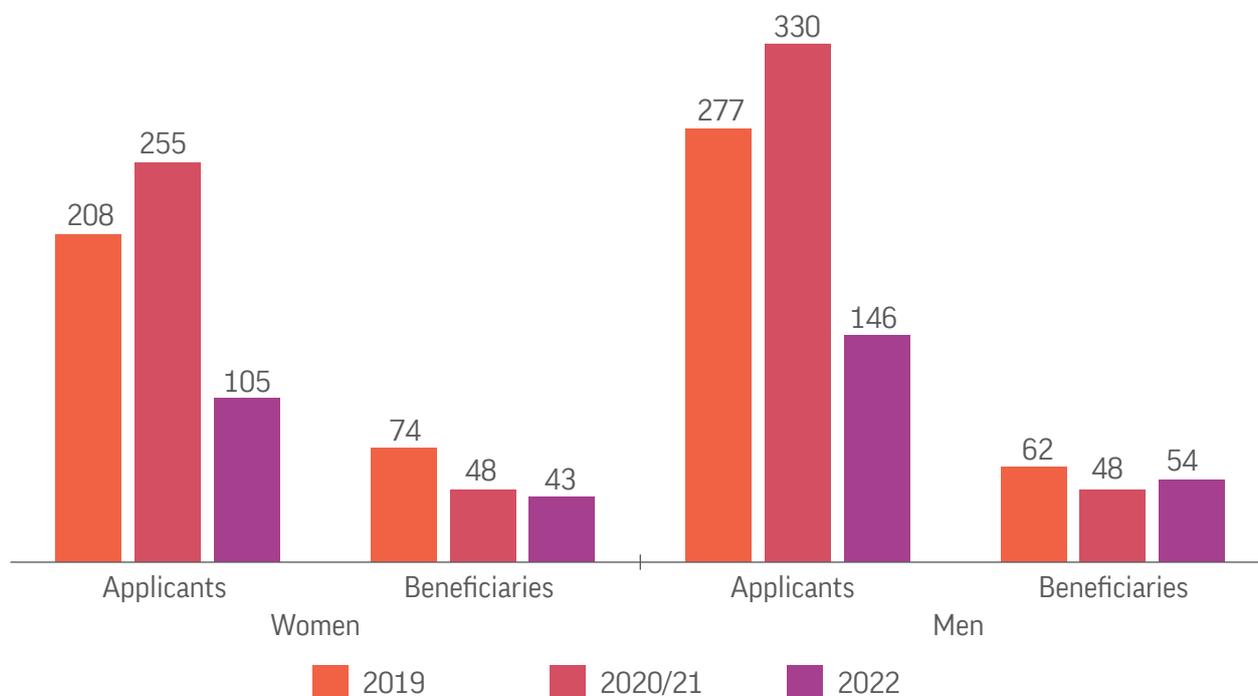
Table 7: Implementation of affirmative measures and their impact:

Year	Gender	Project	Scoring	Affirmative points
Measure: Investments in physical assets				
2019	F	Building the orchard	88	2
2020	F	Building the orchard	92	2
2021	F	Building the orchard	88	0
2022	F	Building the greenhouse	83	0
Measure: Diversification of farms and business development				
2020/21	F	Increasing the capacity of natural honey and bee breeding	82	2
2020/21	F	Construction of the honey room and investment in the hive	87	2
2022	F	Development and promotion of rural tourism and agrotourism, construction of 3 wooden villas	75	0

As can be seen, the affirmative points were applied only in four cases out of seven female applicants, while in three other cases, they were not applied due to the failure to meet the criteria.

In Measure 302/7 “Diversification of farms and business development”, which is considered an affirmative measure supporting female participation through investment grants, women applicants were scored with 2 additional points during the period 2019-2021, while in 2022, the number of additional points awarded to women has increased from 5 to 10 points, depending on the sectors/sub-measures. However, in 2022, the number of female applicants/beneficiaries has decreased compared to previous years, and is at a lower level compared to the number of male applicants/beneficiaries.

The graph below shows the number of women and men beneficiaries, for the Measure “Diversification of farms and business development”, during the period 2019-2022.

Chart 3. Number of applicants and beneficiaries by gender, for the period 2019-2022**Number of applicants and beneficiaries by gender, measure 302:
Diversification of farms and business development, for the period 2019-2022**

Source: AAD, 2019-2022

From the graph, we can see that during 2019, 54.4% of the beneficiaries were women, while 45.6% were men. In 2020/21, the number of female beneficiaries has slightly decreased, while the number of male beneficiaries has increased and reached a ratio of 50:50. Whereas, in 2022, the number of women beneficiaries continued to decrease, reaching 44.3%, while men increased and reached 55.7%.

Affirmative points are not applied to all application cases, due to the ownership criterion, as it was emphasized above that women receive affirmative points only if they have owned land or businesses in the last 3 years.

Regarding additional points for women applicants and/or business owners in the context of agricultural grant applications, survey results revealed that 26.5% of respondents were aware of this policy, acknowledging that women receive additional points during the evaluation process. On the other hand, 73.5% of respondents were not aware of this policy.

Data on land ownership, specifically whether the respondent or any woman in the family is the owner or co-owner of the land, show that 4.8% of the respondents claim ownership or co-ownership. Conversely, the majority, 72.8%, report that they are not owners or co-owners, neither themselves nor any women in the family.

Given that ownership problems are notably more prevalent in the female gender, failure to apply affirmative measures for all cases results in a higher number of rejections among female applicants. Conditional ownership has had a double impact on the affirmative points by losing more than 10 points when evaluating the selection criteria and reducing the likelihood that they will be beneficial. Women have not been provided with an easier opportunity to engage in this activity, which, even though it is related to real estate, has proven that it can be successfully led by the female gender.

3.2.5. Shortcomings in the process of controls of grant beneficiaries

Directorate of Inspection at AAB should plan, organize and carry out field inspections of grant beneficiaries for super inspection and Ex-post inspection.⁴² Field inspections must be carried out by a team of two inspectors who must be in rotation.⁴³ The second inspection is carried out after the investment is made according to the contract and the payment request package is presented by the beneficiary, and in case of non-compliance with the investment plan, it affects the payment approval. The request for payment will be rejected for projects that have not finalized any activity for which it was scored during the evaluation process⁴⁴.

During the analysis of the samples of grant beneficiaries of measure 101 “Investments in physical assets of agricultural households” and 302/7 “Diversification of farms and business development” for the years 2019-2022, we noticed that all beneficiaries have passed the first and second inspection as required by procedure. Further, during their analysis in the part of the inspection reports, we noticed that the inspection process (second inspection and ex post inspection) was carried out twice in a row by the same inspector to the same RDP beneficiary for 2019. The ex-post inspection had not yet been carried out three years after the approval of the final payment to the beneficiary.⁴⁵

Furthermore, in another case during the verification, we noticed that the payment to the beneficiary under measure 101.1 was approved although there was no evidence that it ensured the creation of new jobs. The second inspection related to the designated beneficiary was carried out, however, it did not show that the criterion for securing new jobs was not met. It should be noted that an ex-post inspection was carried out on the same beneficiary and the report identified that the beneficiary does not have the list of employees for which it has won, nor does it have the accounting book.

42 Inspection Regulation, Instructions for conducting field inspections, June 2010, revised 2020, Article 3, page 5

43 Guidance on conducting field inspections, June 2010, revised 2020, Article 11, page 6

44 AI on measures and support criteria for rural development for 2019, chapter II, measure 101 Investments in physical assets in agricultural households, Article 6, point 9.

45 It should be noted that at the request of the economic crimes police, a super inspection was also carried out on the same beneficiary

In order to see how the beneficiaries of the grants have carried out their projects, we have also done their physical observation in the field, where we have visited 6 beneficiaries of the grants, 4 female beneficiaries and 2 male beneficiaries. The results of the physical observation are disclosed below.

Project: Investments in the establishment of the hazelnut orchard with an irrigation system and agricultural machinery



Photo 1: Physical observation in the field, Dashec, Podujeva (Beneficiary's gender, female)

3000-5000 hazelnut seedlings were planted in this project. Investments has been made in tools such as irrigation system, solar panels and an agricultural tractor. According to the farmer, as a family business, the project has engaged family members, while during the summer season it has engaged seasonal workers. Also, they emphasized that the weather was not in favour of the growth of plants because there was damage from the rain. The project has passed the initial phase.

Project: Establishing a hazelnut orchard, investing in orchard machinery



Photo 2. Physical observation, Babimoc, Obiliq (Beneficiary's gender, female)

330 fruit trees were planted in this project. The land has an irrigation system and solar panels installed. The progress of walnut and hazelnut seedlings is poor. According to the authorized person, the project has stalled because there were no good weather conditions and the heavy rains damaged the crops. The project is still in the initial phase.

Project: Investments in the construction of the greenhouse



**Photo 3. Physical observation, Podujeva
(Beneficiary's gender, male)**

In this project, a part of the greenhouse has been built and the equipment has been installed. Also, greenhouse products have been put on the market. According to the beneficiary, it was not possible to plant the entire area foreseen due to the cadastral verification of the land. Therefore, because the greenhouse is not fully planted with vegetables, it can be considered that the project is still in the initial phase.

Project: Increasing the capacity of natural honey and bee breeding



**Photo 4: Physical observation, Lubishte, Viti
(Beneficiary's gender, female)**

In this project, the beneficiary managed to establish 100 beehives, placing them in 3 locations as part of a family business. This project has been successfully implemented and achieved productivity. The project is assessed as completed.

Project: Construction of honey room and investments in hives



**Photo 5. Physical observation Hajkobilla, Prishtina
(Beneficiary's gender, female)**

In this project, the construction of the honey room and other equipment for beehives, including the installation of solar panels, was done. According to the authorized family, it was not a suitable season to develop the activity. The project has been partially implemented.

Project: Construction of guesthouses



**Photo 6: Physical observation Veskoc, Vushtrri
(Beneficiary's gender, male)**

In this project, 3 guesthouses were built and solar panels were installed. The project is in the final stage, but it has not started to be used according to the purpose for the development of rural tourism, because until the time when the field observation was carried out, there was no interest in using these guesthouses.

Based on our observations, we estimated that two of the projects are in the initial phase of implementation, three have been partially implemented, and only one out of the six observed projects has been fully implemented. The implementation of projects, in addition to being influenced by climatic circumstances, can also be influenced by administrative management, the announcement of the call for applications, and continuous supervision for effective implementation.

Based on the information and according to the responsible officials, the shortcomings in the process of inspections by AAD include the appointment of the same inspector to the same beneficiary in two consecutive inspection phases, and this happened because they had no other alternative in appointing different inspectors. This is due to their engagement in performing a large number of inspections, as well as the possibility of technical omissions from the large volume of work. Carrying out successive inspections on the same beneficiary by the same inspector is not in accordance with the internal

inspection procedures and is a conflict of interest as it may enable the inspector to have influence on the grant beneficiary.

Meanwhile, we have not been able to understand the reason for the execution of the payment without fulfilling the criteria for which it has been scored, even though we have asked for evidence. The consequence of this is that the number of employees or the opening of new jobs foreseen in the project cannot be confirmed.

3.3. Registration by the Employment Agency of jobseekers and training profiles for women in rural areas

This chapter presents the findings for the Employment Agency regarding the lack of data by gender in urban and rural areas. The shortage of training services and profiles for the training of women in rural areas are also presented.

3.3.1. There is a lack of data and professional training services disaggregated by urban and rural areas

The Employment Agency should design individual employment plans for vulnerable groups, through the provision of on-the-job training, subsidizing employment, self-employment and promoting entrepreneurship. It should also prepare information, analyses, research, and studies for the labor market needs.⁴⁶

The Employment Agency (hereinafter referred to as EARK) has a data generation system. All services provided by EARK are classified according to: gender, ethnicities, regions, age groups, skills, professions, economic activities and property sector.

The following table shows the number of job seekers by gender, for the period 2019-2022.

Table 8. Registration of job seekers by gender, for the period 2019-2022

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Women	32,382	75,701	38,568	39,169
Men	38,408	93,279	43,474	41,606
Total	70,790	168,980	82,042	80,775

Source: Annual Performance Reports 2019-2022, "Work and Employment", EARK

46 Law NO. 04/L-205 for the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 6, point 1.1 and 1.2

As can be seen from the table, every year the number of women job seekers is lower compared to the number of men. It can also be noted that the number of job seekers differs from year to year. The percentage of job seekers registered in 2022 compared to 2021 among men has recorded a decrease by 4.3%, while among women there has been an increase of 1.6%.

From the total number of registered jobseekers, the largest part is consisted of by unskilled persons and those with a low level of education, namely persons with primary and secondary education. These categories make up 90.3% of the number of registered job seekers.

The number of regular mediations in employment, made by EARK, are presented in the following table.

Table 9. Regular employment mediations by gender, for the period 2019-2022

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Women	1,794	574	1,499	2,147
Men	2,366	756	1,456	2,313
Total	4,160	1,330	2,955	4,460

Source: Annual Performance Reports 2019-2022, "Work and Employment", EARK

From the data presented in the table, it can be observed that only in 2021, women have benefited a slightly higher percentage compared to men, from the process of regular mediation in employment, where women have benefited about 51%, while men about 49%. While in the other three years, the percentage of male beneficiaries was higher compared to the number of women

While the number of mediations in employment through active labor market measures is presented in the following table.

Table 10. Employment mediations through active labor market measures by gender, for the period 2019-2022

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Women	2,198	2,915	2,065	1,249
Men	2,413	2,716	1,232	763
Total	4,611	5,631	3,297	2,012

Source: Annual Performance Reports 2019-2022, "Work and Employment", EARK

The data presented in the table show that from employment mediation through active labor market measures only in 2019, women have benefited about 48%, which is the lowest percentage compared to men who have benefited about 52%. While during the period 2020-2022, the percentage of women beneficiaries is higher compared to men. The percentage of beneficiary women is around 52-63%, while that of men is around 37-48%.

However, we have confirmed that EARK does not have available specific data for urban and rural areas; that show the number of job seekers, mediations or other services.

The lack of data disaggregated by urban and rural areas has occurred because the Employment Agency does not define this measuring indicator regarding the employment of women from rural areas and as a result there is no clear overview of the situation and needs of women from rural areas. Considering that professional skills play a very important role in finding a job⁴⁷ we have analyzed all the sectors where these services are provided.

The table below shows the number of beneficiaries of vocational training disaggregated by gender.

Table 11. General professional skills by gender, for the period 2019-2022

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Women	2,264	901	932	990
Men	4,339	2,535	2,221	1,807
Total	6,603	3,436	3,153	2,797

Source: Annual Performance Reports 2019-2022, "Work and Employment", EARK

The data presented in the table show that the number of women's participation in vocational training is significantly lower than that of men.

As a part of these services, the Employment Agency does not provide vocational training services for most sectors of agriculture. It is worth noting that in 2022, only two types of vocational training have been provided, covering the dairy and fruit and vegetable processing sectors.⁴⁸

Based on the survey, the data on the status of registration at the Employment Office show that 19% of the respondents are currently registered, while the majority (81%) are not registered.

The data show that 15.5% of the respondents are informed about the vocational training opportunities provided by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), and 11.3% have participated in such trainings. On the other hand, 84.5% of respondents are not informed about such training opportunities, and 88.7% have not participated in any vocational training organized by EARK.

The lack of professional training for women in rural areas in most agricultural sectors, as well as the lack of information disaggregated by urban and rural areas, has a negative and influential effect on their integration into the labor market.

⁴⁷ Employment and vocational training

⁴⁸ Annual Performance Reports 2019-2022, "Work and Employment", EARK

CONCLUSIONS

04

4. Conclusions

Responsible public institutions have undertaken a series of actions to strengthen the position of women in society, but no satisfactory results have yet been achieved for the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labor market. Rural Development Programs and affirmative measures have failed to ensure equal support for both genders and there is no evaluation of the achievement of the program's goals from a gender perspective. Affirmative measures are conditional on women to be land or business owners for three to five years, thereby making their goal ineffective, because it limits the participation or support of women and girls who have just started their activity. There is a lack of greater activation in properly informing women about the use of their right guaranteed by law. Whereas, the lack of functioning of the Monitoring Committee has caused problems in the monitoring process of Rural Development programs and as a result they have no data to reflect the results achieved or their impact on the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labor market, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Employment Agency does not have gender-disaggregated data for urban and rural areas regarding registration, employment services, participation in active labor market measures and vocational training of the registered unemployed persons. In particular, the lack of services for the vocational training of women farmers causes this category to have difficulties in their inclusion in the labor market.

The programs and measures of the MAFRD do not ensure the support for gender equality. The change of criteria and their scoring was done without any analysis, thus affecting the affirmative measure and the principle of inclusiveness. In the absence of property, candidates have lost score for both criteria and this double effect shows a negative implication between them. The Ministry has not foreseen a progressive development scheme to continuously include women interested in agriculture by increasing and enriching the scheme of affirmative measures. It is worth noting that the physical observation carried out by the audit team has shown that the progress of the projects has had weaknesses in both men and women beneficiaries.

The Managing Authority cooperates with the AAD to organize information sessions on the RDP and publishes information materials on the Ministry's website, such as instructions for completing forms and other information for applicants. However, there are still deficiencies in conveying information to women living in rural areas.

Delays in the drafting and approval of the Rural Development Programs have caused other chain delays both in the announcement of calls for applications as well as in the selection of grant beneficiaries.

AAD does not have complete information on the number of applicants based on gender for the benefiting grants. This lack of information can create obstacles when designing policies that aim to support the overall development, with a special focus on improving the status of women in rural areas.

Grant applicants are subject to administrative and substantive documentation verification procedures. Due to the complicated and often inaccessible procedures for women farmers with a low level of education, as well as the electronic system used for the selection of beneficiaries, it is impossible to select grant beneficiaries according to an objective judgment based on the principle of gender equality.

There is an increase in interest during the years 2019-2022 for the grants provided under measure 1, "Investments in physical assets and households" but compared to the total number of all applicants, 76-87% of them are rejected, and beneficiaries by women are in a low number of 13-24%. The rejection of women applicants occurred due to complicated procedures during the review and verification for fulfilling the eligibility or even selection criteria.

The Ministry has not managed to carry out ex-post evaluations of RDPs, through which the impact of investments made through grants would be evaluated. The lack of constant situation assessment, cause and consequences has contributed to the unreasonable increase of restrictive measures and the implication of criteria that has made it impossible to involve women to a greater extent as beneficiaries of funds. This was also a consequence of the lack of study of gender issues, examination of their demands and needs in the agricultural sector.

The monitoring reports do not provide sufficient information for the achievement of the objectives according to the program measures. The reports contain general data on applicants by measures, rejects and beneficiaries but not disaggregated by gender. The monitoring committee has not functioned since 2014. In the absence of the committee's functionality, the program monitoring reports have not been addressed and approved.

The control directorate showed deficiencies in the process of appointing inspectors by appointing same inspectors twice in a row, while internal procedures require rotation of inspectors for control. The second control that is done after the investment did not identify the lack of evidence for the employees as well as the reason for non-implementation of the criterion against which the project was scored. Therefore, the number of employees or the opening of new jobs foreseen in the project cannot be confirmed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

05

5. Recommendations

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development should strengthen the impact of policies, programs and measures aimed at promoting the inclusion of women from rural areas in the labor market in order to:

- 1. Provide complete information on the specific needs and demands of women in the agricultural sector by including detailed and comprehensive gender analysis in the design of the program, promoting gender equality.*
- 2. Fully review affirmative measures, to define criteria that take into account the different circumstances of women in rural areas.*
- 3. Play a pro-active role and increase awareness campaigns throughout the year, taking into account the specific needs and challenges faced by women in rural areas.*
- 4. Ensure the functionality of the Monitoring Committee, through continuous supervision of the programs. Monitoring reports should contain more gender-disaggregated analytical indicators to facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of the program's impact.*
- 5. Announcements of calls for applications and selection of applicants should be made in time, so as not to cause delays in the cultivation/production of various agricultural crops related to climatic conditions.*
- 6. Develop mechanisms for the most objective examination of applications, in particular to pay attention to appeal and reconsideration procedures in cases where such procedures are initiated.*
- 7. Modify the electronic data system for the registration and selection of beneficiaries to reflect the number of women and men applicants more clearly and to ensure an objective evaluation based on the principle of gender equality.*
- 8. Strengthen internal controls in order to adequately implement regulations and procedures, including proper rotation of inspectors, to identify and correct deficiencies in the process.*

We recommend the Minister of Finance, Labor and Transfers to ensure that the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo:

- 1. Includes gender-disaggregated analyzes in urban and rural areas in their employment and vocational training reports.*
- 2. Develop training programs that meet the needs of women in rural areas, making them accessible and adapted according to educational levels.*

ANNEX

Annex 1. Audit scope and methodology

Audit scope

The scope of this audit is:

The Employment Agency (APRK) within which are the employment offices and the vocational training center.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFDR) within which are: the Department of Rural Development Policies (Managing Authority) as well as the Department of Advisory and Technical Services.

Agency for Agricultural Development (AAD), within which are: the Directorate for Project Approval and the Directorate of Inspections.

During the audit of these two entities, the main focus is the Program for Agriculture and Rural Development, namely the following two measures:

- a. *Investments in physical assets in agricultural economies,*
- b. *Farm diversification and business development.*

The selection of these two measures was made due to the fact that through them, women farmers have priority in benefiting from investment grants and are scored with additional points.

The audit will cover the period 2019 - 2023, although some circumstances before this period may be audited to collect data for conducting comparative analyses.

Audit methodology

Various techniques are used to answer the audit questions in order to provide appropriate evidence, such as:

- *Analysis of the legal and regulatory framework related to gender equality; protection against discrimination; the law on property and property rights; inheritance;*
- *Analysis of the legal framework for the Employment Agency;*
- *Analysis of the annual performance reports "Employment and Vocational Training";*
- *Analysis of the program for gender equality 2020-2024;*
- *Analysis of the Strategy for agriculture and rural development 2022-2028; Program for agriculture and rural development 2014-2020;*
- *Analysis of various local and international reports and research related to gender equality and women's employment;*
- *Analysis of programs for rural development 2019, 2020-2021, 2022 and 2023;*
- *Analysis of the application guidelines for program measures for rural development;*
- *Analysis of the regulations for tasks, responsibilities, competencies and organizational structure of AAD;*
- *Analysis of the administrative instructions (MAFDR) for the measures and criteria of support for rural development for the years 2019-2022;*
- *Analysis of monitoring reports of the implementation quality of the RDP (2020-2021);*
- *Analysis of employment data/statistics for the audit period;*
- *Analysis of the work reports of AAD 2022;*
- *Sampling based on data provided by AAD.⁴⁹ From the quantitative data, the selection of samples was made according to the stratification for six sectors from the two measures mentioned above. Sampling is based on the case method, professional judgment and the maximum materiality.*
- *Development of the survey with the support of UN Women, with women living in rural areas in Kosovo.*
- *Field visit*
- *Exchanges of practices with SAI involved in parallel auditing*
- *Other documentation relevant to our audit work.*

⁴⁹ Lists of grant applicants/beneficiaries for both measures.

Annex 2. Analyzes of criteria and number of beneficiary controls

Table 12: Criteria and their change 2019-2023 for measure 1

1. Measure 1 Investments in physical assets										
Medium-term objectives of the program: Improving the quality of life of residents in rural areas through the diversification of activities on farms and off farms, with the aim of creating new jobs and increasing the income of rural residents.										
No.	Selection criteria Greenhouses	Score 2019			Score 2020/21		Score 2022		Score 2023	
1	Land surface 50-55 ares	50	55	50	55	50	55	50	55	
2	Acceptable investments depending on 30,000-60,000	5	8	10	5	8	10			
3	Contractual relations (a valid contract with third parties)		3							
4	Environmental protection and climate change		2		10		10		10	
5	Creation of new jobs, according to AI		10		10		5		20	
6	Support for the first time		10		5		10			
7	Ownership of the land where the investment is made		3*		5*		10*			
8	Professional preparation	3	5		3					
9	Gender of the farmer (Affirmative measure)		2		2*		2*		2	
10	Young applicant (under the age of 40)						3		3	
Selection criteria Orchard (fruit, berry tree)		2019			2020/21		2022		2023	
1	Land surface 1 to 3 hectares		55		55	50	55	50	55	
2	Value of eligible investments 30000-60000	5	8	10	5	8	10			
3	Contractual relations (a valid contract with third parties)		3		10					
4	Environmental protection and climate change		2		10		10		10	
5	Creation of new jobs		10				5		20	
6	Ownership of the land where the investment is made		3*		5*		10*			
7	Professional preparation	3	3	5	3					
8	Investments in mountainous areas						5		10	
9	Support for the first time		10		5		10			
10	Young applicant (under the age of 40)						3		3	
11	Gender (Affirmative measure)		2		2*		2*		2*	

Table 13: Criteria and their change 2019-2023 for measure 302/7

1. Measure 7/302 Diversification of farms and family businesses; Rural tourism, Honey production and Crafts/Non-agricultural activities										
No.	Selection criteria - Rural tourism	Score 2019		Score 2020/21		Score 2022		Score 2023		
1	The applicant's experience in rural tourism (for natural persons, to be described in the project (with FIN) - proposal or in the business plan; for enterprises, to be proven with the business certificate)	25	35	25	35	50	55	40	45	
2	Place of investment (Mountainous areas)	5	10	5	10		10		15	
3	Type of investment: In case of investment from both point a) and point b), the scores are calculated from the investment with the largest part of the funds (maximum 20 scores)	5	10	15	5	10	15			
4	Age (Young applicant under 40 years old)		5		5		5		10	
5	Gender		2		2		5		5	
6	Employment		10		10		5		5	
7	Support for the first time		10		10					
8	Cultural heritage		8		8		5		5	
9	Education		3		3					
10	Support from LAG		2		2		5		5	
11	Environmental Protection*						10		10	
Selection criteria - Honey production		2019		2020/21		2022		2023		
1	Size of the farm at the time of application*	40	50	40	45	50	45	55	40	45
2	Business registration		5		5		5		10	
3	Employment		5		5		5		10	
4	Applicant's address/residence**	10	5	5	10		5			
5	Support for the first time		10		10					
6	Gender		2		2		5		10	
7	Age		5		5		5		5	
8	Education		5		5					
9	Organic agriculture		8		8					

10	Environmental protection*				10	10
11	Food safety				10	
Selection criteria - Crafts		2019	2020/21	2022	2023	
1	Applicant's gender	45	55	10	5	5
2	The applicant's experience in craft activities (for natural persons (with NIF), to be described in the project proposal or business plan; for enterprises, to be proven with the business certificate)	10	15	35	40	15
3	Age (Young applicant under 40/over 40)		10	10	35	45
4	Place of investment	5	10	10	15	15
5	Employment		10	15	10	10
6	Support for the first time			10		

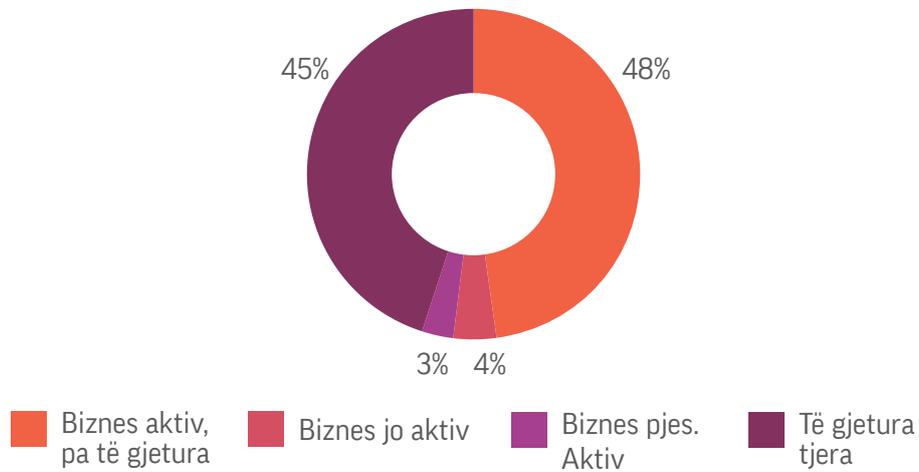
Source; Rural Development Guidelines and Programs, 2019-2023

Table 14: Audits performed during the years 2019-2023

Controls carried out during 2019-2023					
Control activities	2019	2020	2021	2022	September 2022- September 2023
Second control for beneficiaries of the previous year	302	-	20	9	402
First control of the RDP of the relevant year	510	334	418	313	536
Second control of the relevant current year	69	372	313	-	-
Ex post control 2016	349	-	-	-	-
Ex post control 2017	-	356	-	-	-
Ex post control 2018	-	-	551	-	-
Ex post control 2019	-	-	-	58	390
Recontrols	29	8	27	1	8
Ex post recontrol	25	-	-	104	6
Super control	2	2	-	-	440
Total	1,286	1,072	1,329	485	1,782

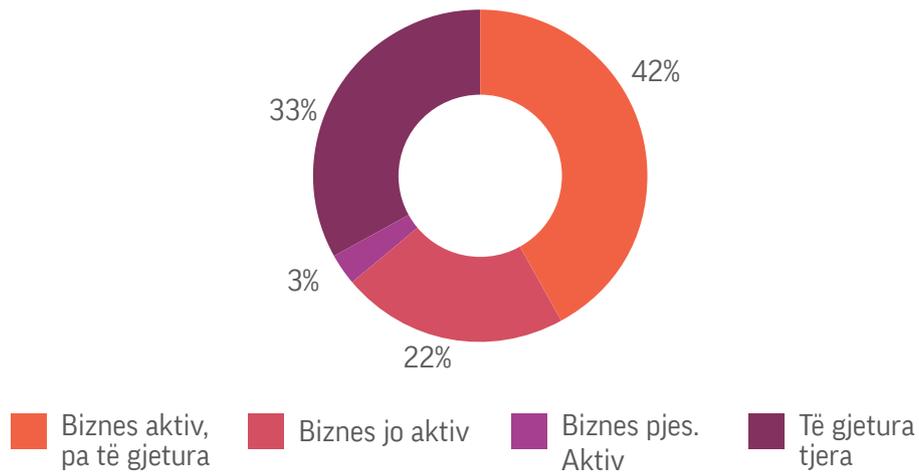
Source: Analysis of the annual work reports, the reports of the RDP controls, and the ex-post control reports of the Audit Directorate at the AAD

Chart 4: Ex post audit report for beneficiaries of measure 101 of 2019



Source: Monitoring report of ex post audits of AAD

Chart 5: Report of ex post audits for beneficiaries of measure 302 of 2019



Source: Monitoring report of ex post audits of AAD

Annex 3. Survey report

Exploring the economic opportunities and challenges of women in rural areas in Kosovo

Introduction

The UN Women office in Kosovo has hired a company to conduct a survey of 400 women living in rural areas of Kosovo. The primary goal of the survey was to determine women's level of knowledge about and access to government subsidies and grants from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development (MAFRD). The survey also aimed to collect data on economic development and quality of life through business diversification, community development, and social inclusion.

The specific goals of the survey were:

- *Assessment of the level of employment and income of women in rural areas*
- *Examining the factors that contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas*
- *Identification of factors that influence migration from rural to urban areas*
- *Exploring the potential for balanced economic and social development in rural areas*

This report has several sections. The first section presents an overview of the survey methodology and sampling procedures. The survey findings are presented in the following sections, with a focus on key areas such as personal and household data, women's access to information, participation in economic activities, and MAFRD grants. The report concludes with recommendations for future policies and interventions to improve the lives of women living in rural areas in Kosovo.

Methodology

The methodology developed for the survey of 400 women in rural areas in Kosovo used a layered approach in three phases:

- *Selection of first sample units (FSU): Survey Areas (SAs) in rural settlements based on polling stations (VCs) served as geographic clusters. VCs were selected proportionally to the number of households in each region, with a random selection from the national list. The maps of the chosen VCs were obtained in advance from the Central Election Commission (CEC).*
- *Selection of households: Households were systematically selected within the survey areas. Surveyors started at a specific point, followed a random route and selected households through door-to-door visits.*
- *Selection of respondents: Within households, the survey was conducted with a woman in the household aged 18+ who had recently celebrated her last birthday.*

However, as in any research where primary data is collected, it is important to highlight some limitations of this study:

- *Limited representation: The survey findings are based on a limited sample of 400 women in rural areas of Kosovo and may not be fully representative of the entire population of women living in rural areas of Kosovo.*
- *Sample size and confidence level: According to the Kosovo population census, there are 183,794 women over the age of 18 living in rural areas, which we will use as our population for this study. While the survey aims for a 95% confidence level with a sample size of 400 women, the margin of error is 4.89%. This information is critical for understanding the accuracy and reliability of the survey findings and the interpretation of the research results.*
- *Knowledge and remembrance of respondents: Respondents face challenges remembering specific details or not having enough knowledge on the topic, especially when it comes to household economic activities or grant-related information.*
- *Perception of respondents: Respondents may have given answers that they perceive as desirable answers from the social circle, or from the organization that carries out the survey instead of expressing their true experiences or opinions.*

Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that women face in rural areas, laying the groundwork for effective strategies to increase their economic empowerment and social inclusion.

Personal data

The sample of 400 women living in rural areas in Kosovo demonstrates a proportional distribution based on the population of women in rural areas in the seven regions of Kosovo. Prishtina has the highest share at 22.5%, followed by Prizren (20.0%), Peja (15.0%), Ferizaj (12.5%), Gjilan (10.0%), Mitrovica (10.0%), and Gjakova (10.0%). This distribution provides a balanced representation, allowing for a thorough exploration of prospects. While the majority of the women were Albanian (95.5%), some came from non-majority communities, specifically Bosnian (4.5%).

Figure 2 Region

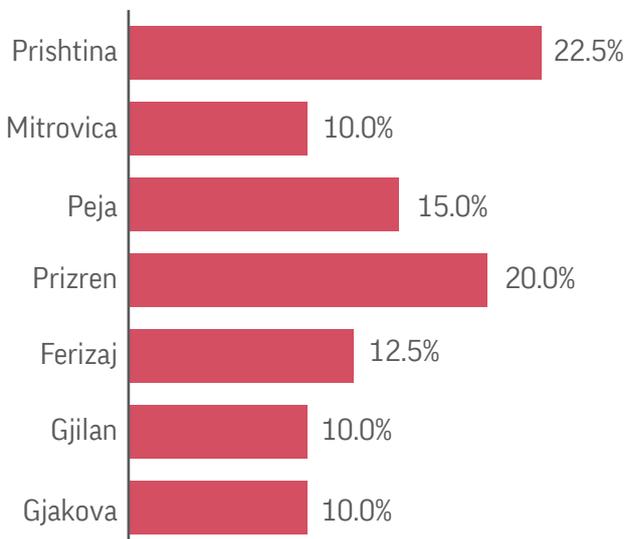
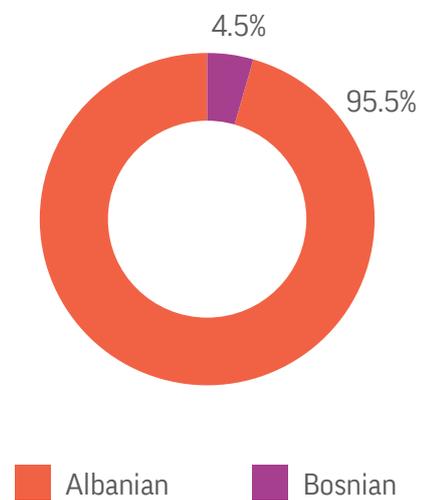


Figure 3 Ethnicity



The sample of 400 rural women in Kosovo is divided into age groups based on the women's last birthdays and their availability to answer. The age group 18-24 years old accounts for 12.3% of the sample, followed by the age groups 25-34 years old (16.5%), 35-44 years old (19.5%), 45-54 years old (27.0%), 55-64 years old (20.3%), and 65 years or older (4.5%). This stratification represents the perspectives of rural women of various ages. The majority of respondents (73.3%) are married, with 3.3% living with their partners. Meanwhile, 16% are unmarried. Additionally, 7.0% are widowed, while 0.5% are divorced.

Figure 4 Age group

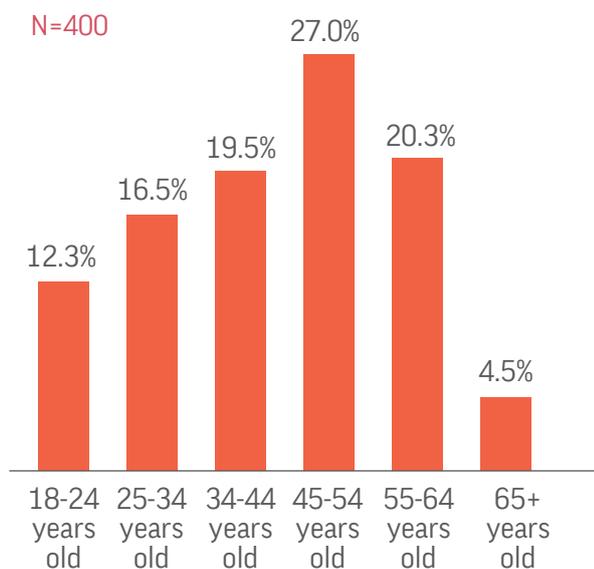
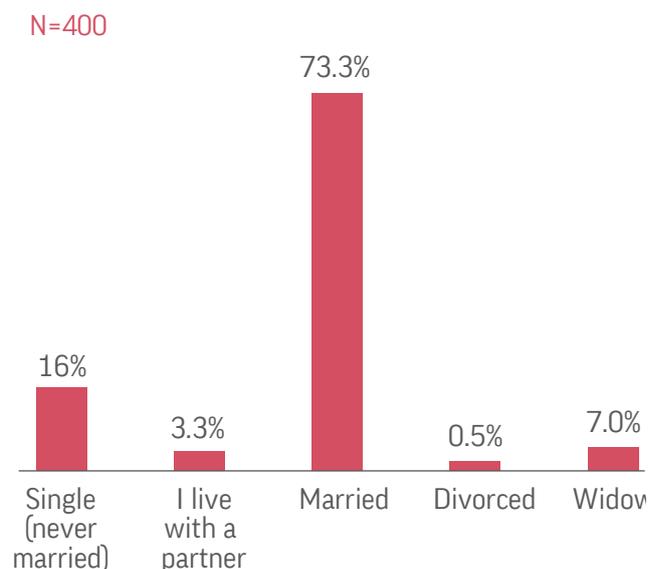


Figure 5 Civil Status



In terms of the number of children, 20% of the women surveyed say they have none, 5.8% have one child, and 18.3% have two. The most common response was that they have three children, as reported by 28.8% of respondents. Additionally, 15.5% have four children, 8.3% have five, and 2.3% have six children. Only a few respondents reported having seven, eight, or nine children, with rates ranging from 0.3% to 0.8%. It should be noted that all women in this survey reported the number of their children, regardless of whether they are adults or not, and whether they are part of the current household. Furthermore, women who reported having children were asked if they had children under the age of 6. 14.1% reported having one child under this age, 6.6% had two children under this age, and 1.3% had three children.

Figure 6 Number of children

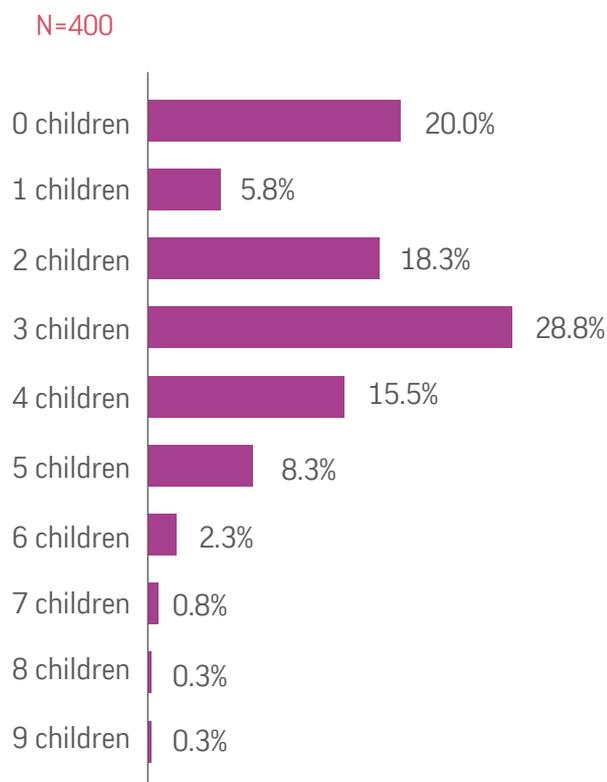
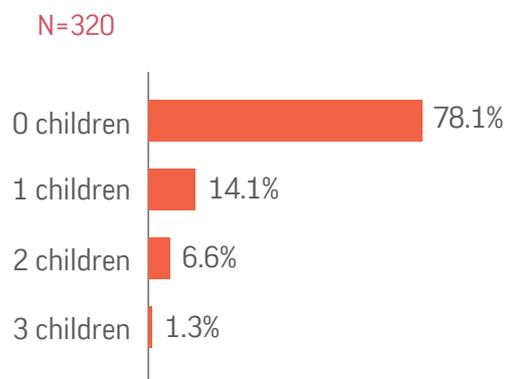
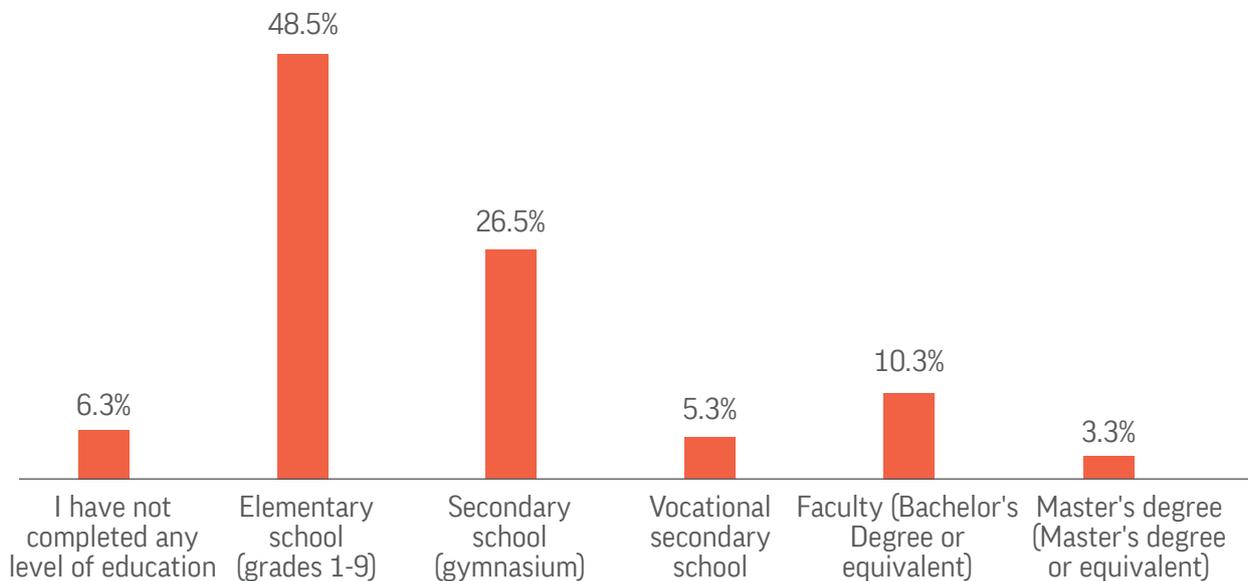


Figure 7 Number of children under 6 years old



As regards to the highest level of education completed, the data show a varied distribution. Approximately 6.3% of the respondents stated that they have not completed any level of formal education. Almost half (48.5%) of them have completed primary school (grades 1-9), while 26.5% have completed secondary/high school (gymnasium). A smaller percentage (5.3%) has completed vocational education high school. Furthermore, 10.3% stated that they have completed college/faculty (Bachelor's degree or equivalent), while 3.3% have completed masters (Master's degree or equivalent).

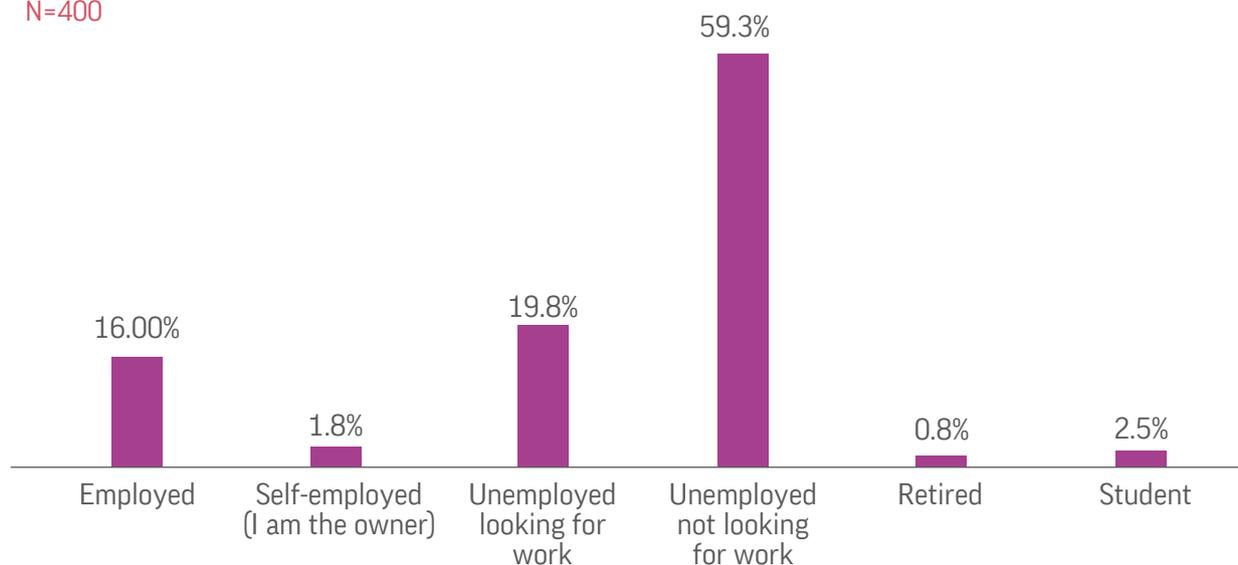
Chart 8 Level of education completed



The data on the current employment status of the respondents show that 16% of the respondents are currently employed, while 1.8% is self-employed or business owners. A significant part, which constitutes 19.8%, is seeking employment as they are unemployed, while the majority (59.3%) are unemployed and are not seeking employment. A small percentage (0.8%) constitutes retired people and 2.5% are students.

Chart 9 Employment status

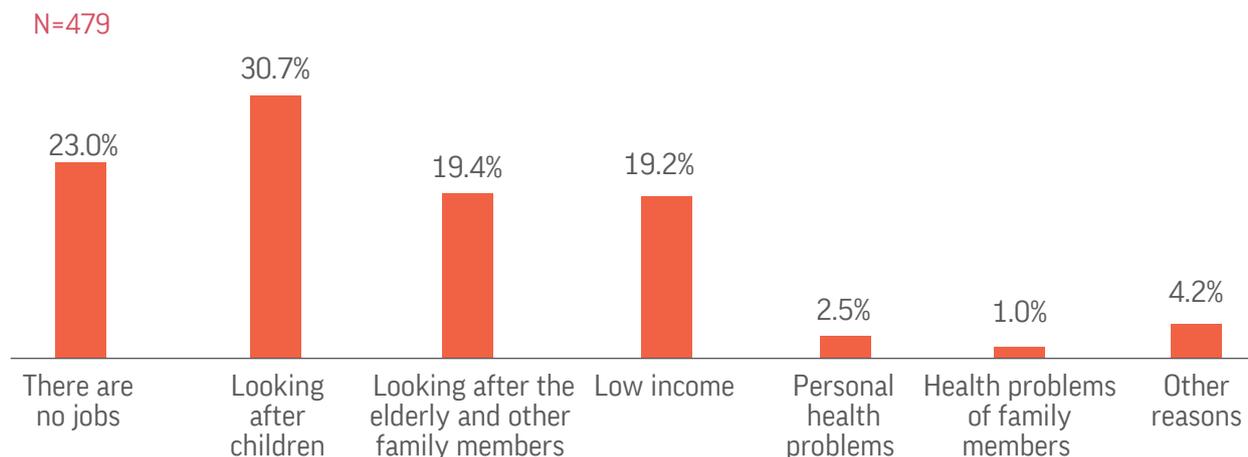
N=400



The main reasons for not seeking employment are different. Thus, 23.0% of the respondents mentioned the lack of jobs as the main reason. Also, 30.7% stated that their focus on child care is a significant factor, while 19.4% mentioned care for the elderly and other family members, 19.2% highlight the low salaries as a predominant reason. A smaller percentage (2.5%) attribute their inactivity in employment

to personal health issues, while only 1.0% point out health issues affecting family members. Another 4.2% indicate various other reasons. These percentages shed light on various factors that influence women's decisions not to seek employment.

Chart 10 Reasons for not seeking employment



**vetëm ato që nuk kërkojnë punë*

**paraqiten % e përgjigjeve "Po" për secilën arsye*

Data on the status of registration at the Employment Office show that 19% of the respondents are currently registered, while the majority (81%) are not registered. For those respondents who are not registered at the Employment Office, the reasons are different. Of them, 7.4% mention that they are currently employed or engaged in their own business, 55.6% express a lack of interest in work and 36.1% mention a lack of knowledge about the existence of the Employment Office. Furthermore, 0.9% state that they are already employed, potentially implying that they have no interest in other work.

Chart 11 Registration with the Employment Office

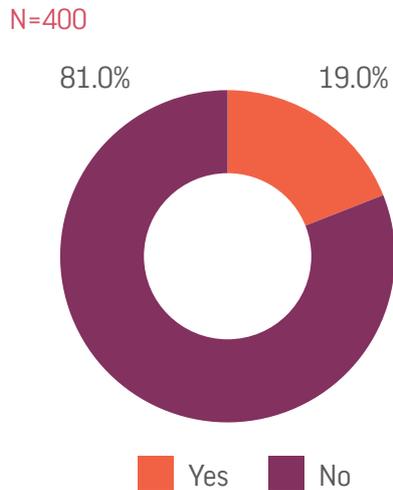
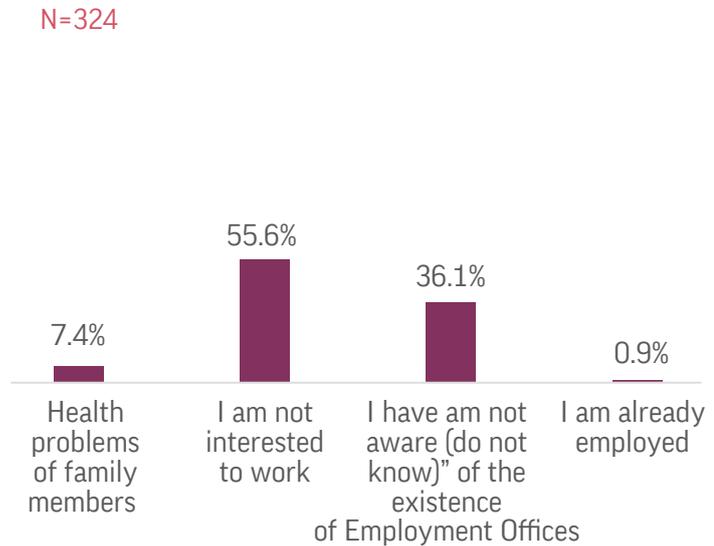


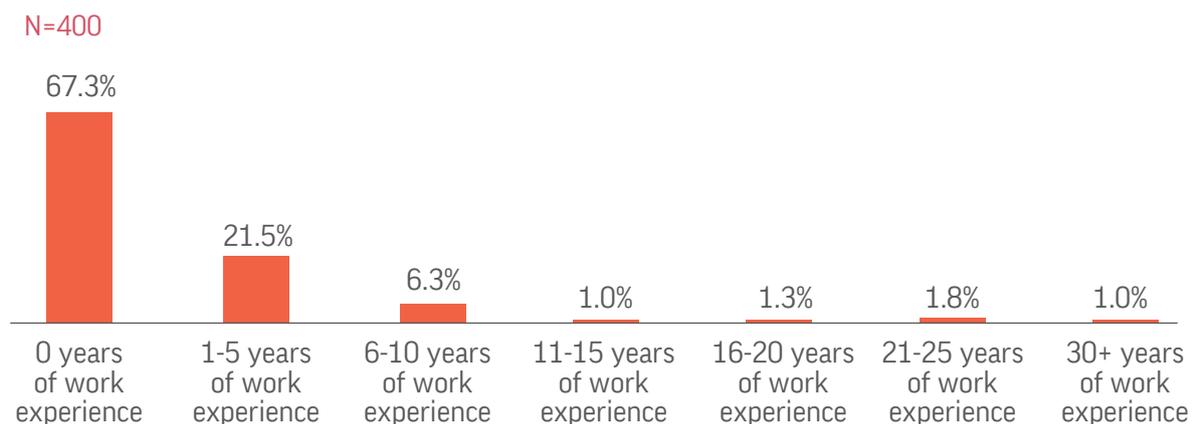
Chart 12 Reasons for not registering with the Employment Office



**vetëm ato që nuk janë të regjistruara në Zyrë të Punësimit*

The data on work experience show that a significant percentage of respondents have different levels of work experience. Notably, 67.3% have no previous work experience (0 years of work experience). Further, the data shows that 21.5% have 1-5 years of work experience, 6.3% have 6-10 years of work experience, while smaller percentage has work experience ranging from 11 to 30+ years.

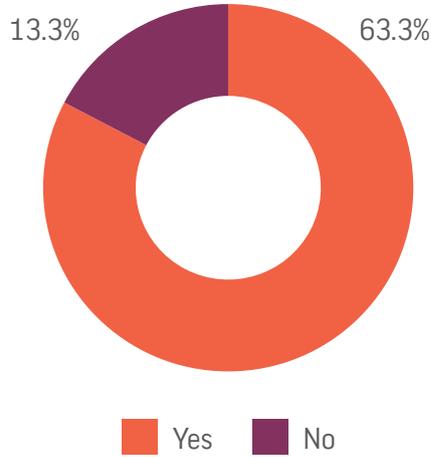
Chart 13 Work experience in years



Whereas, 63.3% of women who are married or cohabiting with someone, indicate that their husbands work. However, it should be noted that the survey did not collect details about the employment sector, the formality, or even about their place of work.

Chart 14 Employment of husband or cohabiting partner

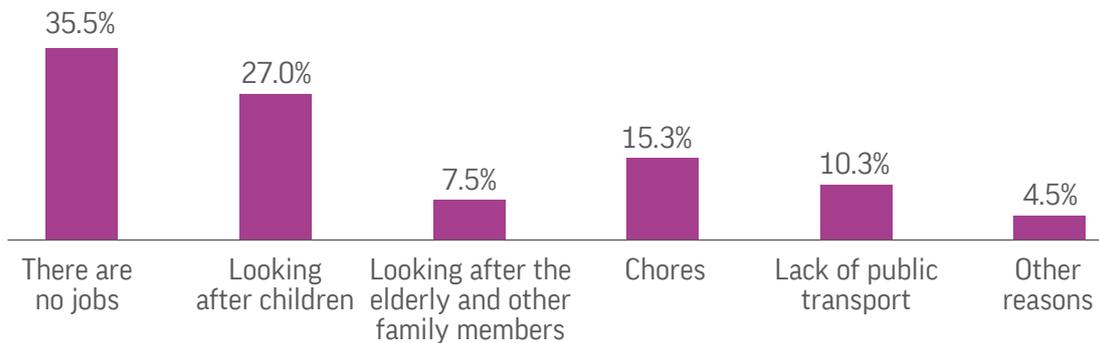
N=306



The main challenges that prevent women in rural areas from engaging in employment are various, as reflected in the survey outcomes. Significant percentage (35.5%) indicates the lack of job opportunities as the main challenge. Furthermore, 27% mention child care responsibilities as a major obstacle, while 7.5% mention the need to care for the elderly and other family members. Household responsibilities, included in housework, were identified by 15.3% of respondents as an important challenge. Moreover, 10.3% highlight the lack of public transport as an obstacle to employment. A smaller percentage (4.5%) attributes the challenges to other reasons. These findings provide valuable insights about specific barriers that women in rural settings face in their search for employment.

Chart 15 Perception of the main challenges that prevent rural women from working

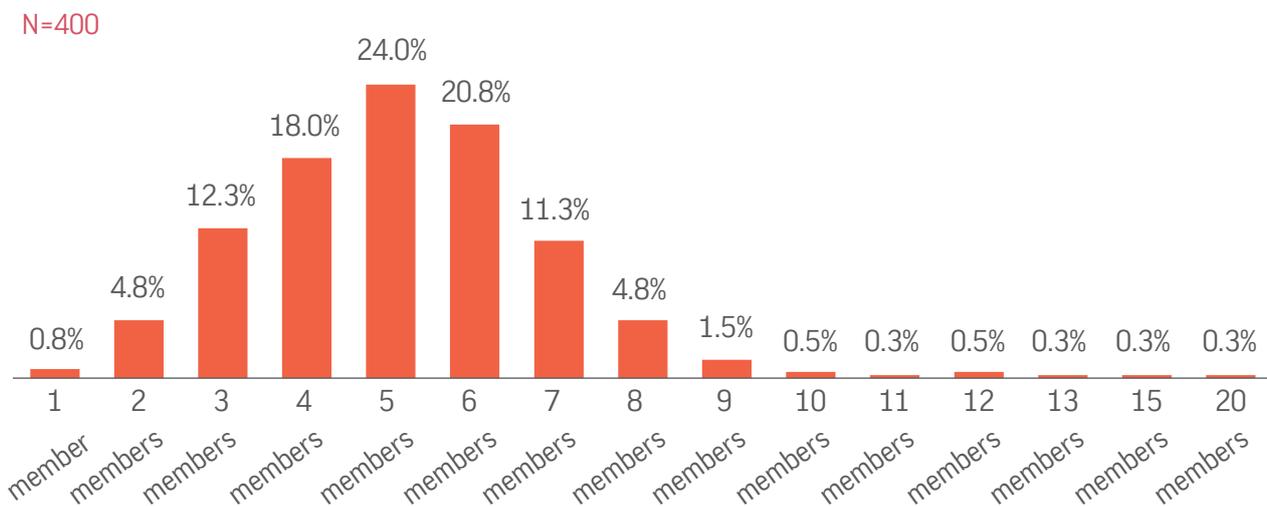
N=400



Data on households and economic activity

The data on family size illustrate a varied distribution among the surveyed respondents. Almost one quarter (24%) of respondents have a household of 5 members, thus making it the most common household size. Following, 20.8% report that they have 6 family members, while 18.0% have 4 members. Further, the distribution includes households with 3, 7 and 2 family members, each with 12.3%, 11.3% and 4.8% respectively. Smaller percentages represent families with 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 20 members. These valid percentages, derived from the responses of 400 respondents, provide a comprehensive picture of different household sizes within the surveyed population.

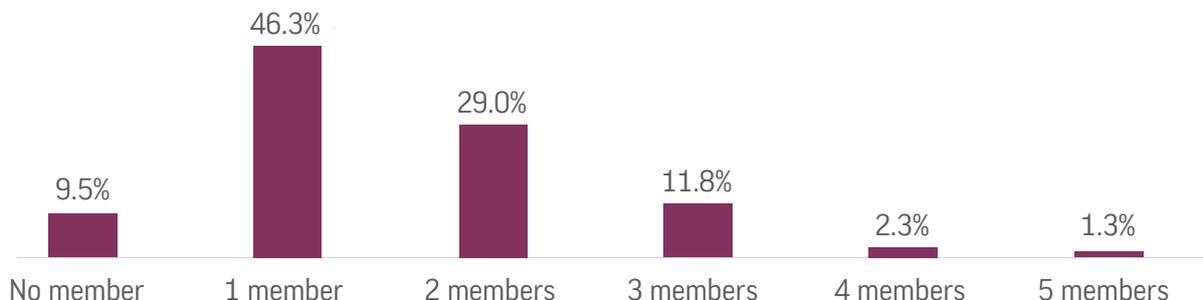
Chart 16 Number of family members



The distribution of currently employed family members, including themselves, provides insight into employment dynamics within households. A significant percentage of 46.3% reports that only one family member, including themselves, is currently employed. Also, 29.0% mention that two family members work, while 11.8% have three family members employed. Smaller percentages represent households with four, five or no employed members. Specifically, 2.3% of them have four employed family members, 1.3% has five, and 9.5% report that they have no employed family members.

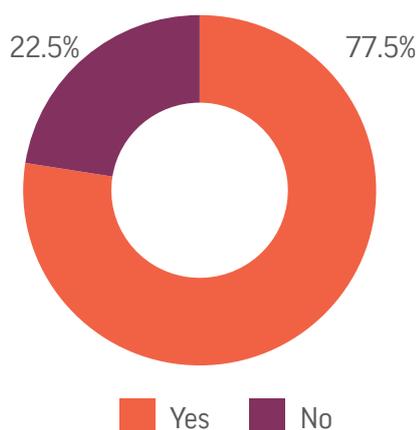
Chart 17 Number of employed family members

N=400



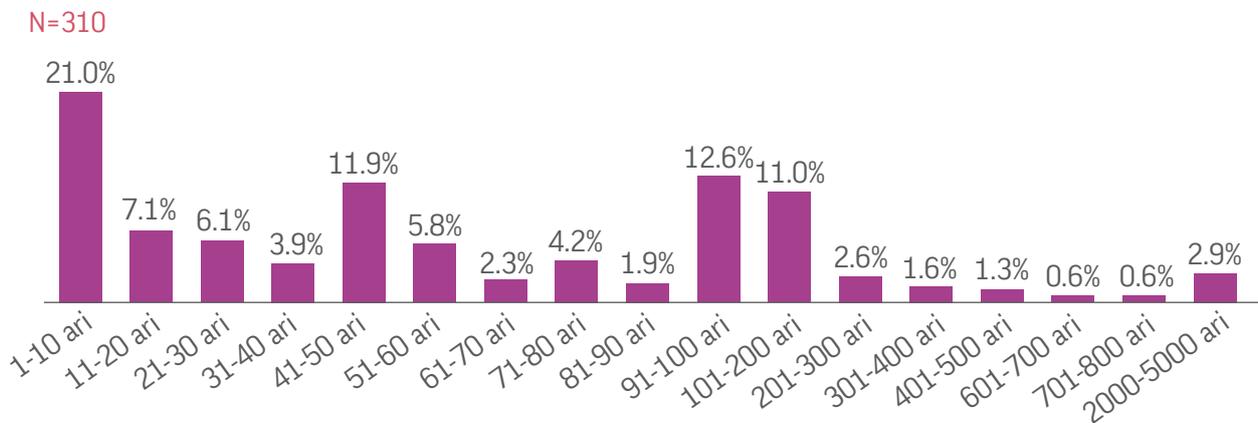
The data on the ownership of agriculture land within the households surveyed show that a significant percentage of 77.5% confirm that they own agriculture land. On the other hand, 22.5% report that their households do not own land for agricultural activities.

Chart 18 Ownership of agriculture land



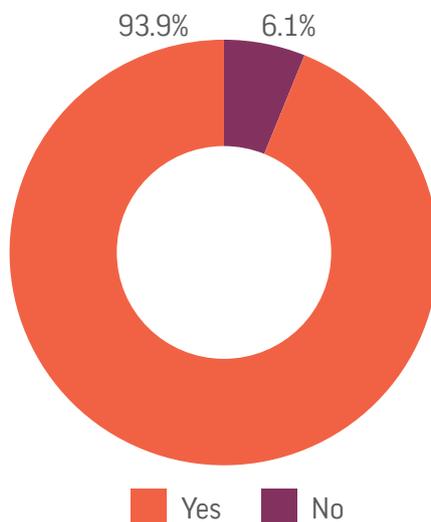
The data on the land surface area in Ares vary. Thus, 21.0% of respondents report that they own land with a surface area ranging from 1 to 10 Ares, while 12.6% have land surfaces between 91 and 100 Ares. Other significant percentages include 11% with land surface area between 101 and 200 Ares, and 11.9% between 41 and 50 Ares. Smaller percentages represent different land size categories, including those that do not know the exact size. These data provide valuable insight for the diversity of agricultural land surfaces owned by surveyed households.

Chart 19 Lad surface area in ares



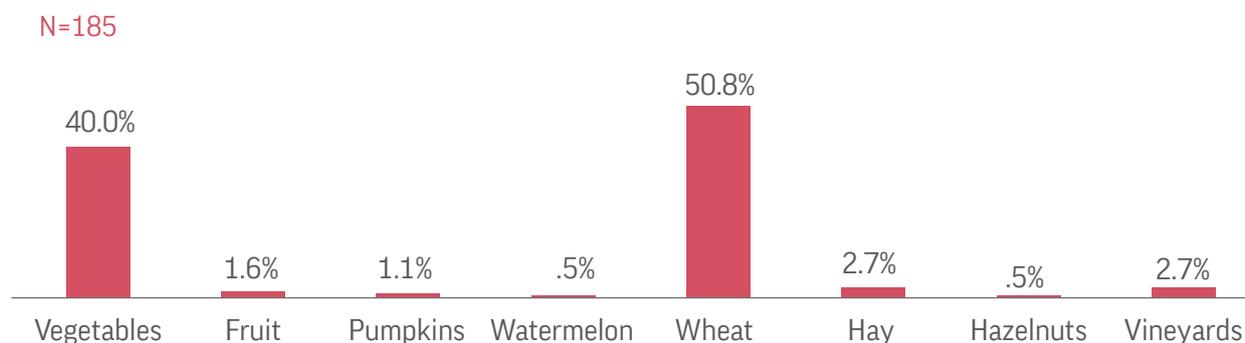
The data on land ownership, specifically whether the respondent or any woman in the household is the owner or co-owner of the land, show that 4.8% of the respondents confirm ownership or co-ownership. The opposite of this, the majority (72.8%) report that they are not owners or co-owners, neither themselves nor any women in the household. These percentages obtained from the responses of 400 respondents provide insight regarding the distribution of land ownership within the surveyed population and indicate the need for further exploration regarding individuals involved in land ownership within the household context.

Chart 20 Land under ownership or co-ownership of household women



Women who stated that their households own land were further asked to elaborate what they cultivate. The results show that 50.8% of them cultivate wheat, making it the most mentioned crop with the highest percentage in total. After wheat, 40% of respondents reported that they grow vegetables. Also, some respondents mentioned cultivation of fruit trees, pumpkins, melons, hay, hazelnuts and vineyards. It is important to note that some respondents may have mentioned more than one crop. This information provides a general overview of different types of cultivation on the lands of the respondents' households.

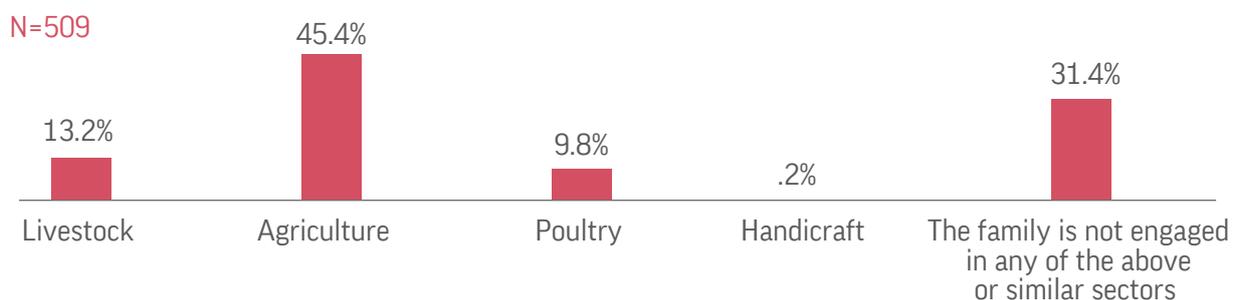
Chart 21 Cultivation of crops on agricultural land



**reported overall percent, not percent of cases, for ease of reporting*

The data regarding the engagement in rural development sectors reveal important information. Around 45.4% of households deal with agriculture, 13.2% focus on livestock, while 9.8% deal with poultry, while 31.4% report that they are not engaged in these sectors, pointing out different ways of life in rural areas. These findings highlight the importance of agriculture and demonstrate various economic activities that shape rural development.

Chart 22 Rural development activities in which households are engaged



**reported overall percent, not percent of cases, for ease of reporting*

The table below provides an overview of specific activities within various sectors. In the livestock sector, 10.4% of respondents are involved in beekeeping and beekeeping care. While, a significant percentage (89.6%) focuses on the care and raising of animals such as cows, sheep and goats. In agriculture, 97.3% deal with the cultivation of vegetables for consumption purposes. However, only 2.7% cultivate agricultural products specifically for the needs of their animals. In the craft sector, one respondent stated that they are involved in tailoring.

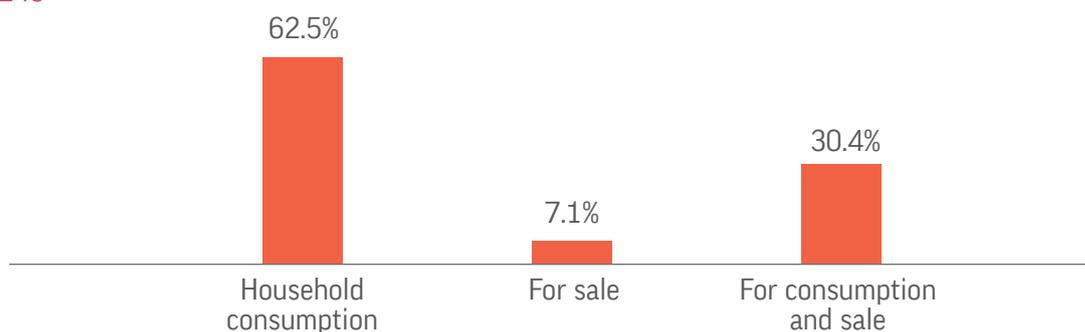
Table 15 Specific rural development activities in which households are engaged

Specific activity	Livestock (N=67)	Agriculture (N=223)	Crafts (N=1)
Beekeeping and beekeeping care	10.4%		
Care and raising animals (cows, sheep, goats)	89.6%		
Planting and cultivation of vegetables for consumption purposes		97.3%	
Planting and cultivation of agricultural products for the needs of animals		2.7%	
Tailoring			100%

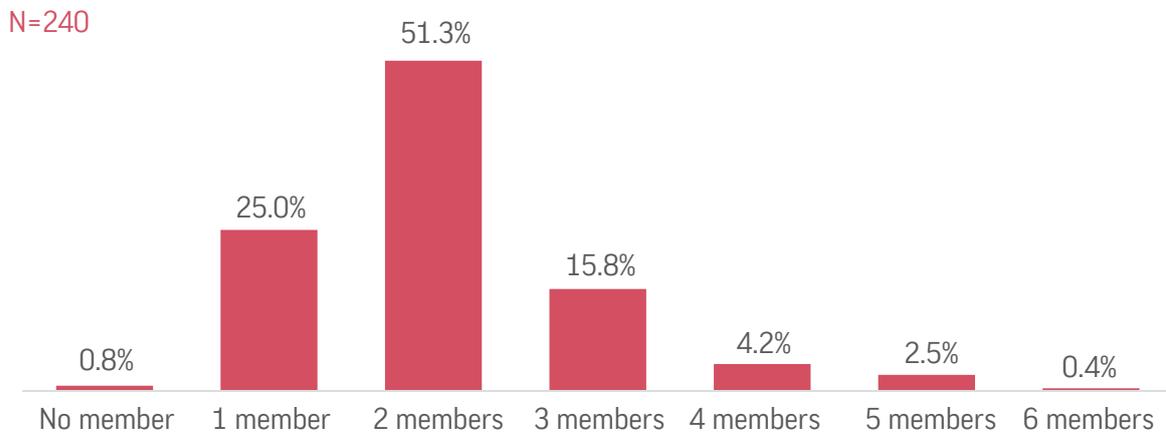
The data on the purpose of products resulting from the household activities highlight that 62.5% of them cultivate crops for family consumption, 7.1% for sale and 30.4% for both personal consumption and sale.

Chart 23 The use of products from the household activities in rural development

N=240



The breakdown of the engagement of family members in specified activities shows that 0.8% report that they did not engage family members (these two cases stated that they employ seasonal workers for their needs to work the land and no family member is engaged), while 25% have one member engaged, 51.3% two members, 15.8% three members, 4.2% four members, and 2.5% have five members engaged in activities.

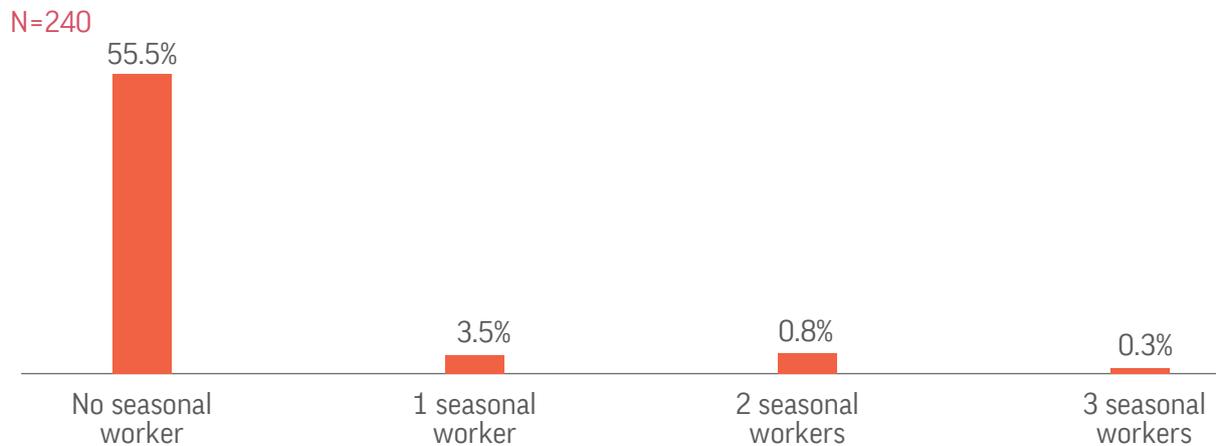
Chart 24 Number of family members employed/engaged in rural development activities

The table below outlines the distribution of family members engaged in certain activities, highlighting the differences between men and women. In particular, 13.3% of households do not engage men in activities related to rural development and 21.7% of them do not include women, indicating a segment of households where no family member contribute. Most households have only one family member employed (63.8% have one man employed and 67.1% have one woman employed). A significant percentage of household include two men family members (18.3%) and two women family members (9.6%). A smaller percentage extends the engagement to three family members (3.8% for men and 1.7% for women), while cases with four or more engaged members are few. In general, the table provides data on different levels of engagement of family members by gender in rural development activities.

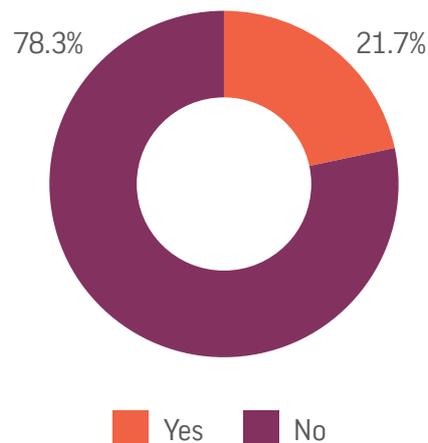
Table 16 Number of men and women family members employed/engaged in rural development activities

Number of engaged members	Household men		Household women	
	N	%	N	%
No member	32	13.3%	52	21.7%
1 member	153	63.8%	161	67.1%
2 members	44	18.3%	23	9.6%
3 members	9	3.8%	4	1.7%
4 members	1	0.4%		
5 members	1	0.4%		
6 members				
Total	240	100%	240	100.0%

The data on seasonal workers show that 92.5% of respondents reported having no seasonal workers, while 5.8% have one seasonal worker and 1.3% have two seasonal workers. Also, 0.4% mentioned that they have three seasonal workers.

Chart 25 Number of seasonal workers employed/engaged in rural development activities

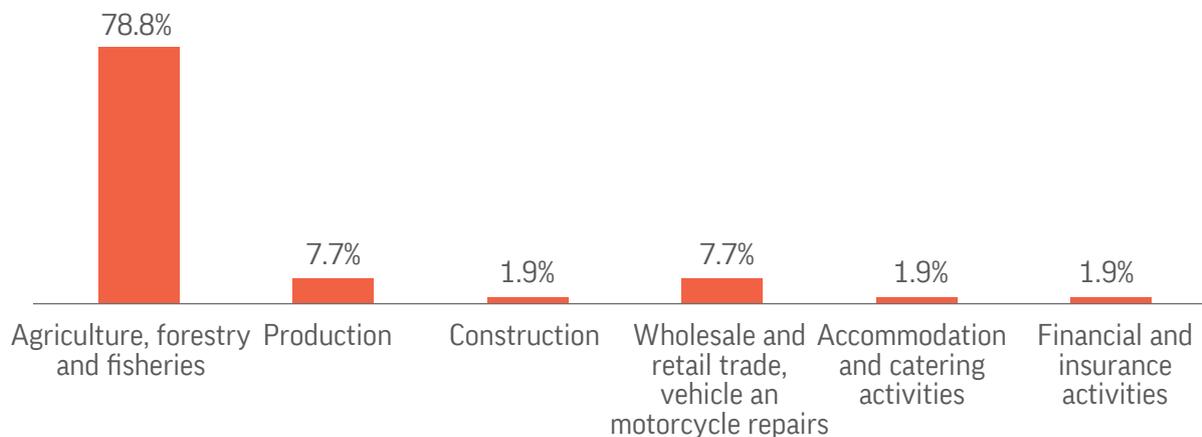
The data on registered family businesses show that 21.7% of respondents have registered family businesses, while the majority (78.3%) do not have registered family businesses.

Chart 26 Possession of registered family businesses

From the analysis of the sector, in which the registered family businesses are engaged, it results that most of them (78.8%) operate in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, based on NACE codes. Also, a smaller percentage is involved in the manufacturing sector (7.7%), they are also involved in wholesale and retail trade, vehicle and motorcycle repair (7.7%), while 1.9% of them declare that the business is involved in accommodation and food service activities, construction, and financial and insurance activities.

Chart 27 Business activity (according to NACE Rev 2 codes) of registered family businesses

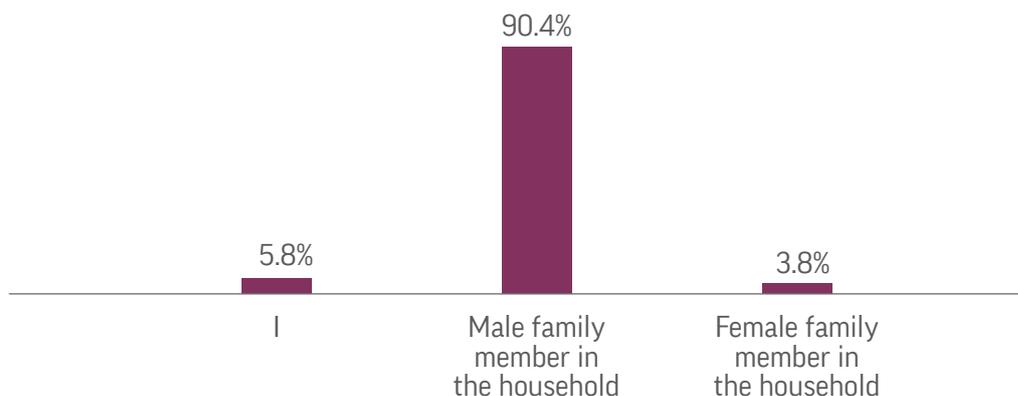
N=52



Only 9.6% of women are business owners of their family businesses, while 90.4% of cases are men who own these businesses. Regarding experience as a business owner, of the women who are owners, either by themselves or another woman in the family, one woman has been a business owner for 1 year, one has been a business owner for 2 years, two women have been a business owner for 5 years and has been in this role for 10 years.

Chart 28 Ownership of registered family businesses

N=52



The distribution of the number of workers in registered businesses, categorized according to schedules, i.e. full-time and part-time, shows that of businesses with registered employees, 28.8% do not have any full-time workers, while 55.8% have a full-time worker. Moreover, 7.7% have two full-time workers and 1.9% each has three and four full-time workers. In terms of part-time employment, 55.8% of businesses have no part-time workers, 38.5% have one part-time worker, and 5.8% have two part-time workers. This breakdown provides information on staffing patterns within registered businesses, highlighting the predominance of full-time.

Table 17 Number of employees in registered family businesses

Number of employees in the registered business	Full time		Half time	
	N	%	N	%
No employees	15	28.8%	29	55.8%
1 employee	29	55.8%	20	38.5%
2 employees	4	7.7%	3	5.8%
3 employees	1	1.9%		
4 employees	1	1.9%		
5 employees	2	3.8%		
Total	52	100%	52	100.0%

The data regarding the possession of a Farmer's Identification Number (FIN) in households show that 0.5% of the respondents have their own FIN, 23.8% report that a male member of the family has one and 0.8% mention a female family member who has a FIN. However, the majority (67%) declare that no one in their family has a FIN, while 8% are unsure. For those without FIN, the reasons differ. The most common reasons include 45.5% having no land in their name, 47.5% stating lack of interest and 2.5% citing other reasons.

Figure 29 Possession of the Farmer's Identification Number (FIN), according to family members

N=400

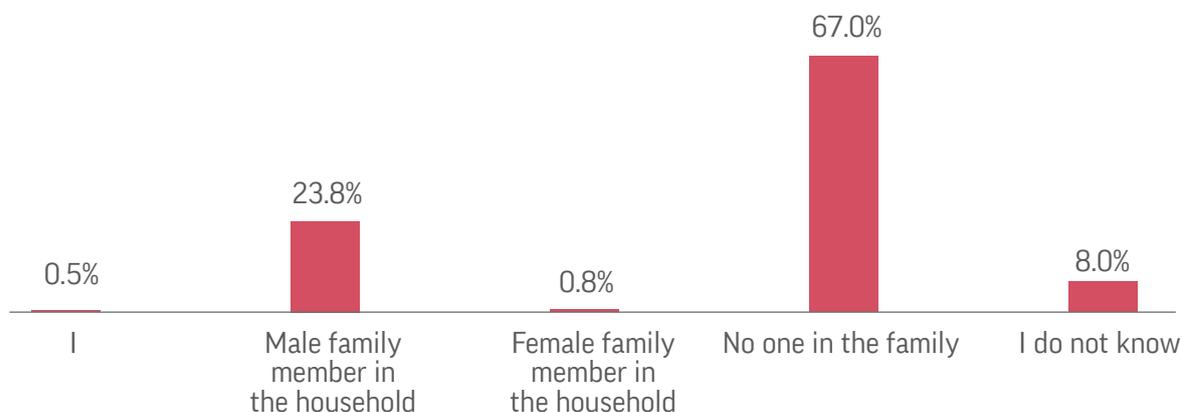
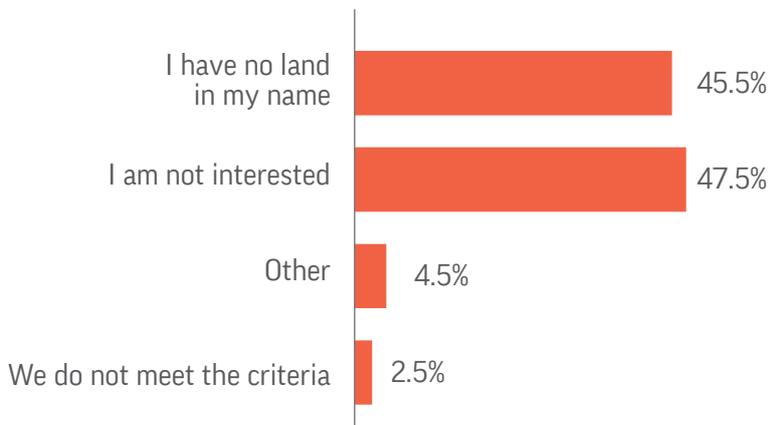


Figure 30 Reasons for not having a Farmer's Identification Number (FIN)

N=398



Information and benefit from grants of MAFRD

Data on awareness and participation in agricultural grants from the Ministry of Agriculture show that 67.3% of respondents are aware of such grants, while 32.8% are not. Regarding the application, 12% of the respondents (or their family members) applied for these grants, while the majority (88%) did not. Among those who applied, the majority (83.3%) had a male family member as the applicant, 10.4% applied themselves and 6.3% had a female family member as the applicant. However, when it comes to the success of applications, the data shows an even split, with 50.0% reporting having received the grant, and the remaining 50.0% reporting unsuccessful applications. From the total sample, it appears that 6% (24 out of 400) of respondents or their family members have benefited from a grant.

Figure 31 Information about the granting of grants by the Ministry of Education and Culture

N=400

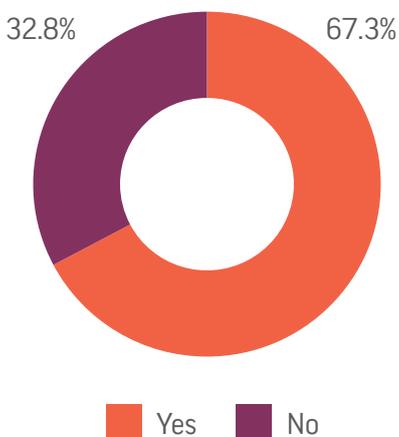


Figure 32 Application for grants from the Ministry of Education and Culture

N=400

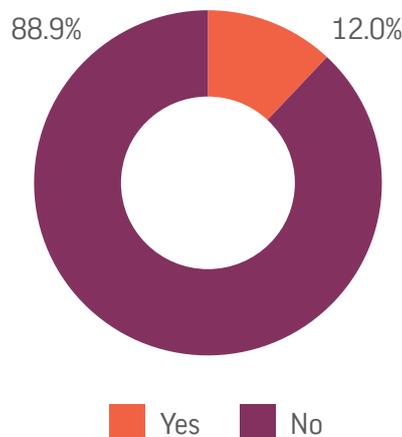


Figure 33 Applicant for a grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture

N=48

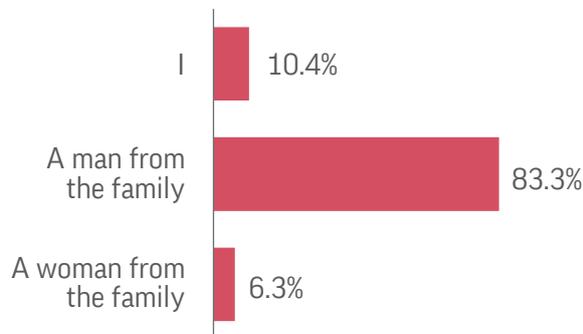


Figure 34 Utilization of the grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture

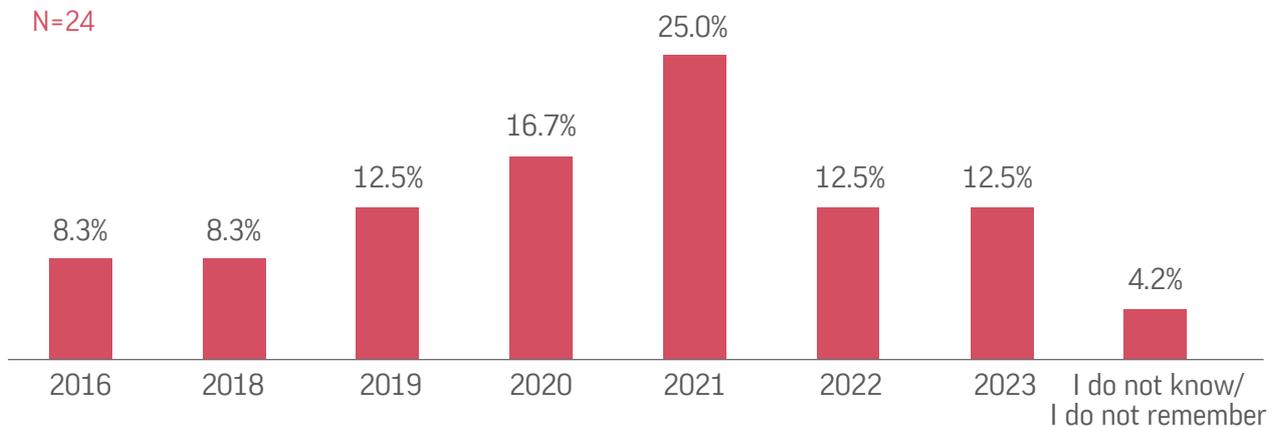
N=48



Regarding the year of the grant benefit, the respondents reported different years, mentioning 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The data show that 25.0% of the grants were received in 2021, 16.7% in year 2020, and 12.5% in 2019, 2022 and 2023. 9.3% mention the years 2016 and 2018, while 4.2% do not know or remember the year of the benefit.

Figure 35 Year of benefit of the grant

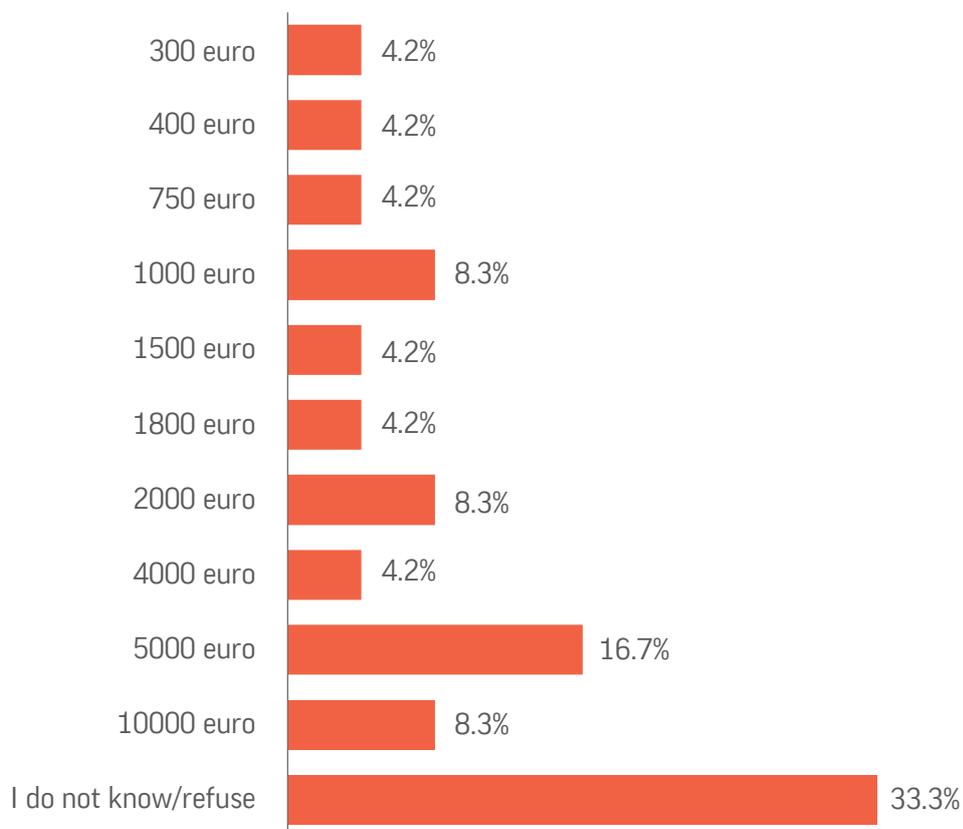
N=24



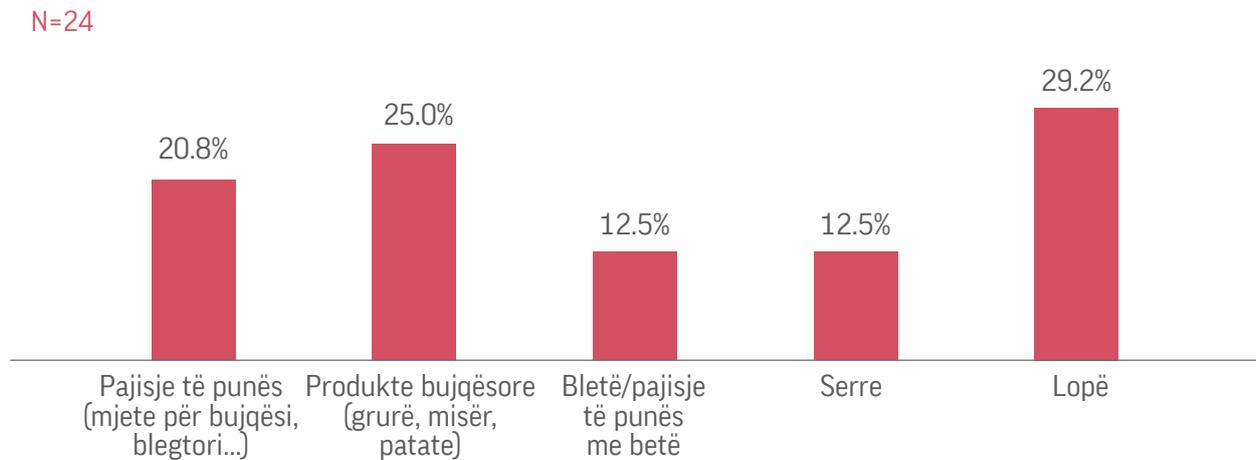
Regarding the value of the grant, respondents reported different figures ranging from 300 euros to 10,000 euros. The most common amounts were €5,000 (16.7%), €10,000 (8.3%), €2,000 (8.3%) and €1,000 (8.3%). Notably, 33.3% of participants either did not know the grant amount or refused to disclose it.

Figure 36 The value of the grant received

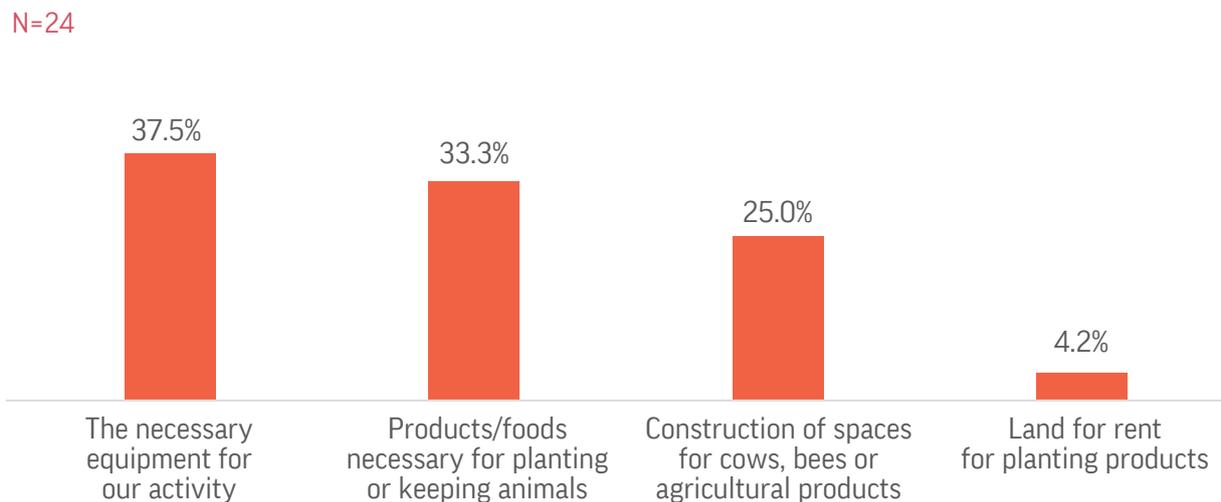
N=24



Respondents or their family members received grants for various purposes, including farming equipment (20.8%), agricultural products (25.0%), bees or beekeeping work equipment (12.5%), greenhouses (12.5%) and cattle (specifically, cows) (29.2%). the data show the diversity of the use of grants in the respondents' households, providing information on the specific sectors and activities that benefit from these grants.

Figure 37 The things for which the grant was benefited

Respondents who received grants reported that they invested in different aspects of their agricultural activities. The data show that 37.5% have invested in the necessary equipment for their activity, while 33.3% have allocated their grants for the products needed for planting or animal care. Also, 25% directed their investments towards the construction of spaces for cows, bees or agricultural products. A smaller percentage, 4.2%, chose to use the grant to rent land for planting. This information provides valuable insight into the specific areas where grant funds have been used to improve agricultural practices and support the livelihoods of the individuals surveyed.

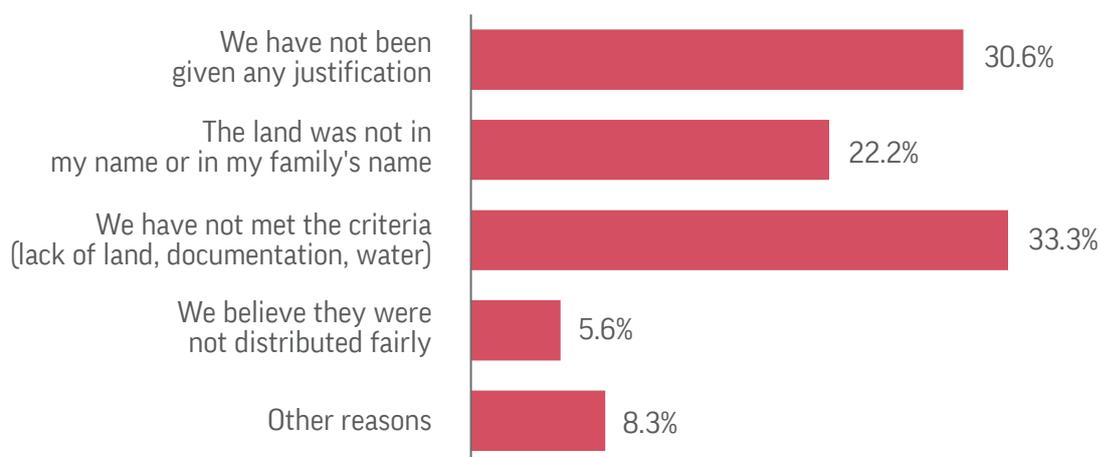
Figure 38 Things in which the received grant is invested

Grants do not seem to have affected employment, as most did not hire new workers (75%). However, 25% have hired from a new worker (25%). Of those who have hired, in two cases women have been hired and in four cases men have been hired. As for the additional points, in the cases where the woman was a grant applicant (only 8 cases), in 75% of the cases they declared that they earned additional points, while in 25% they declared that they did not.

Among respondents who applied for grants and were ever denied, the reasons for grant denial varied. A significant proportion (30.6%) reported that they were not given a specific reason for the refusal. About 22.2% indicated that the land was not registered in their name or in their family's name, while 33.3% mentioned not meeting the criteria, such as the lack of land, documentation or water resources. A smaller percentage, 5.6%, expressed the belief that the grants were not distributed fairly. Additionally, 8.3% cited other reasons for refusal. These findings highlight the challenges and issues applicants face during the grant application process, highlighting areas that may need attention for improvement.

Figure 39 Reasons for not benefiting from the grant (whenever)

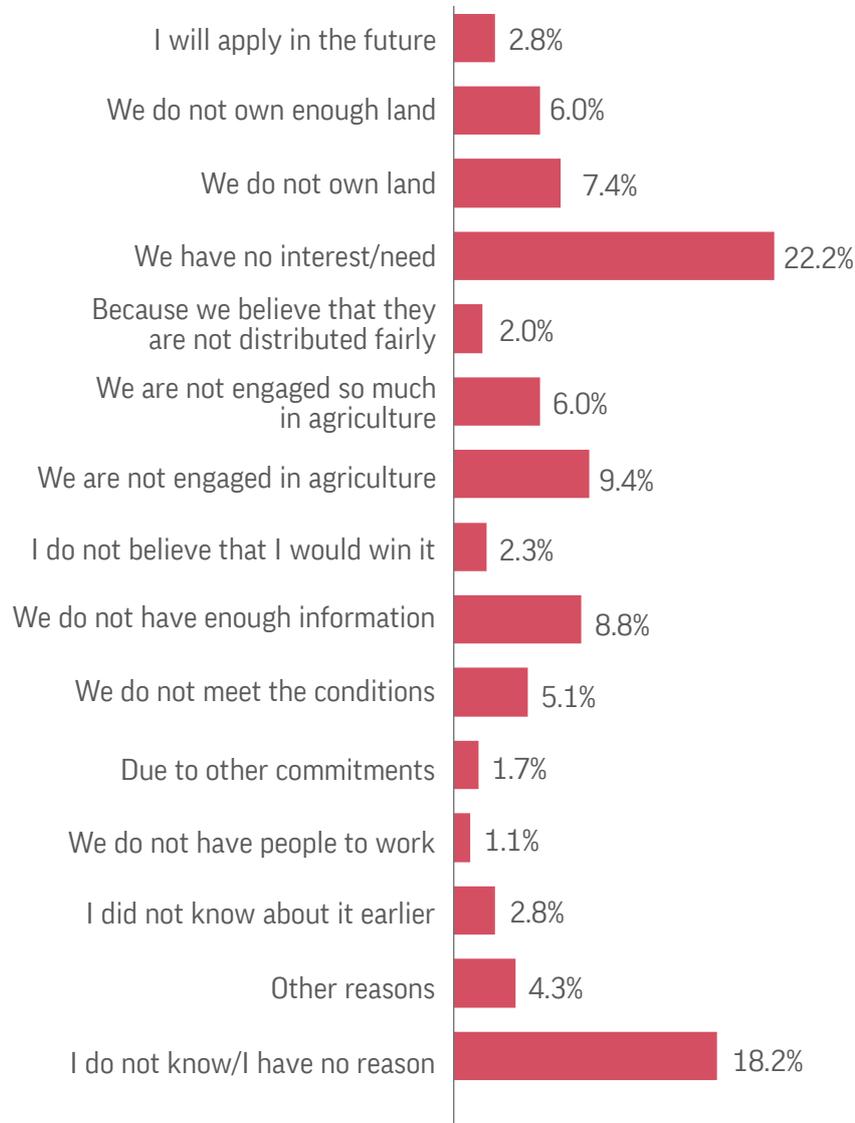
N=36



Those who have not applied for grants were asked to elaborate on the reasons for not applying. Reasons for not applying for grants vary among respondents, with 2.8% expressing intentions to apply in the future. Approximately 6% mentioned insufficient land ownership, while 7.4% mentioned no land at all. A significant portion (22.2%) reported a lack of interest or need and 9.4% stated that they were not very involved in agriculture. About 8.8% have mentioned the lack of sufficient information and 5.1% have said that they do not meet the required conditions. Also, 18.2% either did not know the reasons or did not have a specific reason for not applying. These different responses highlight the multiple factors that influence individuals' decisions not to apply for grants, providing valuable information for improving the extent of information about subsidy programs and grants from public institutions.

Figure 40 Reasons for not applying for grants from the Ministry of Education and Culture

N=352



Access to advisory services and training

Among the respondents, 34.8% are aware of the agricultural counseling provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD). On the other hand, 65.3% of respondents are not aware of them. However, as far as participation in training or counseling by the Ministry of Education and Culture is concerned, only 3.3% have participated in them. This information underscores the need for targeted efforts to raise awareness and encourage more active participation in these valuable programs. Of those who participated (only 13 of them), 15.4% were moderately satisfied/neutral with the training and 84.6% were very satisfied.

Figure 41 Information and participation in training or counseling by the Ministry of Education and Culture

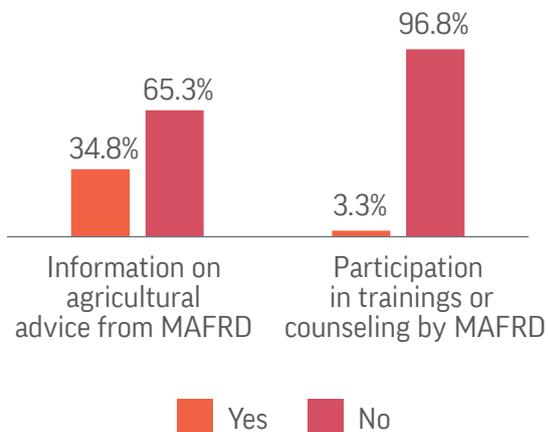
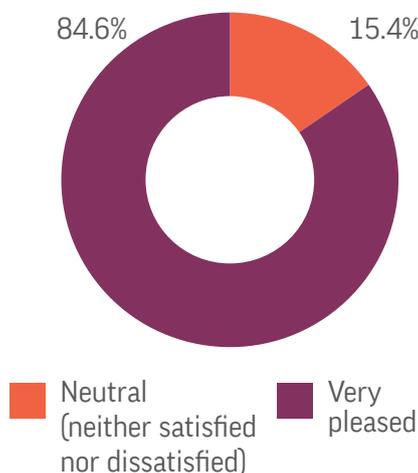


Figure 42 The level of satisfaction with the trainings of the MAFRD

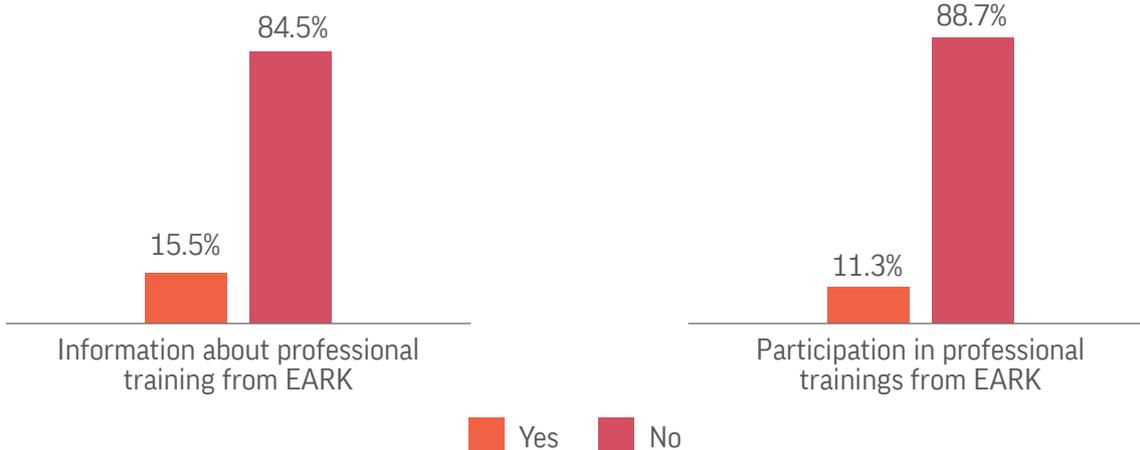


The data show that 15.5% of the respondents are informed about the professional training opportunities offered by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), and 11.3% have participated in these trainings. On the other hand, 84.5% of respondents are not informed about such training opportunities, and 88.7% have not participated in any professional training organized by APRK.

Figure 43 Information and participation in professional trainings from EARK

N=400

N=62

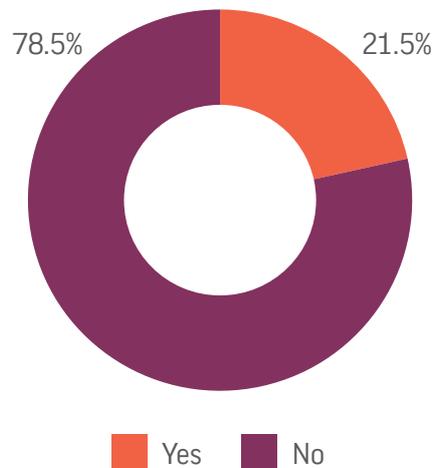


Interest in starting economic activities

As for the interest in starting economic activities, the data show that 21.5% of respondents express a positive attitude, showing interest in starting a new economic activity. On the contrary, the majority, which is 78.5% of respondents, currently do not have such intentions. This insight into the aspirations of respondents can inform strategies and support mechanisms to encourage and facilitate economic initiatives within the respondent population.

Figure 44 Interest in starting any economic activity

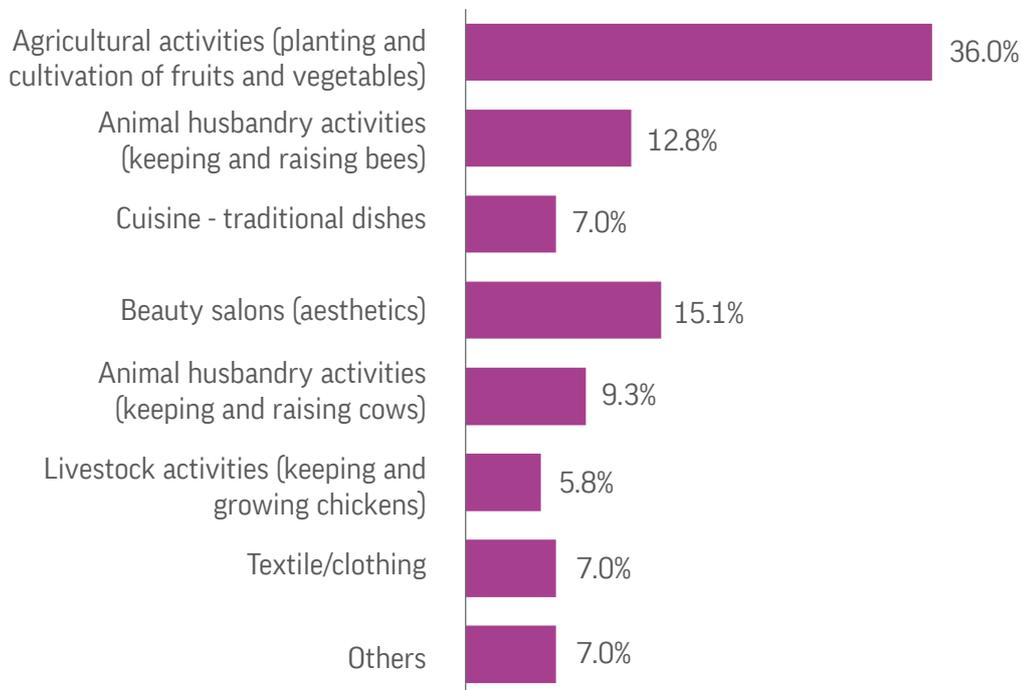
N=400



Regarding the type of economic activity they would like to start, the highest interest lies in agricultural activities, where 36% express the desire to engage in activities such as planting and cultivating trees and vegetables. Also, 12.8% are interested in keeping and raising bees, while 7% express interest in traditional cooking. Moreover, 15.1% express the desire to create beauty salons, focusing on aesthetics. A smaller percentage, 9.3%, is interested in engaging in activities related to keeping and raising cows, and 5.8% keeping and raising chickens. Textile and clothing activities (7%), as well as various other interests, are also represented.

Figure 45 The type of economic activity they would like to start

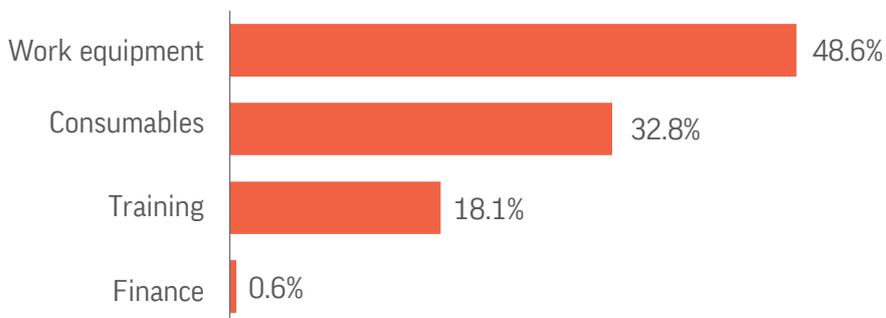
N=86



The results of the survey show that among respondents who would like to start an economic activity, there are requests for different forms of support. Regarding the necessary support, 48.6% of respondents expressed the need for work equipment, emphasizing the importance of having the right equipment for their activities. Additionally, 32.8% of respondents identified a requirement for consumables. Meanwhile, 36.4% of respondents expressed interest in training, emphasizing the perceived importance of developing skills and improving knowledge. However, only a minimal percentage (1.1%) indicated the need for financial assistance. The data suggest a diverse set of requirements, with a particularly strong emphasis on work equipment and consumables needed to start economic activities.

Figure 46 The necessary support for starting an economic activity

N=117

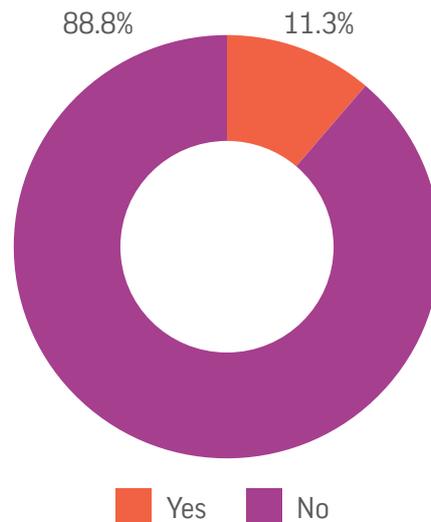


**reported overall percent, not percent of cases, for ease of reporting*

Regarding the need for specific training to help find a job, the survey found that 11.3% of respondents (45 individuals) acknowledged such a need, indicating an interest in acquiring skills that could increase their employability. On the contrary, the majority, consisting of 88.8% of respondents (355 individuals), expressed that they do not perceive the need for specific training to find a job.

Figure 47 The need for training to find a job

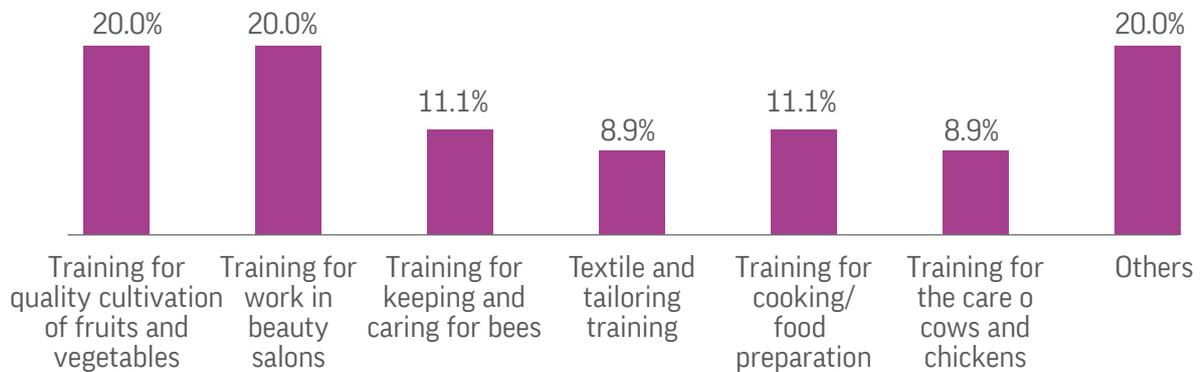
N=400



For those respondents who expressed a need for specific training (45 individuals), the survey explored the types of training they found useful. The responses showed a variety of interests, with 20% expressing a desire for training in quality fruit and vegetable cultivation, and an equivalent percentage expressing interest in training related to working in beauty salons. Additionally, 11.1% of respondents expressed interest in training in beekeeping, textile and tailoring, cooking/food preparation and animal care. Moreover, 20% of the respondents have shown interest in other types of training.

Figure 48 Types of training needed to find a job

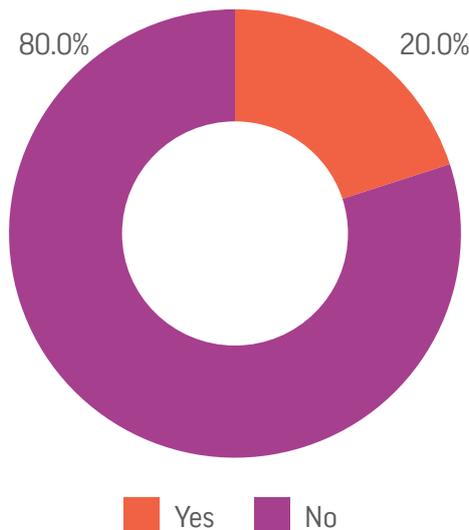
N=45



The findings of the survey regarding the awareness of grant opportunities from the MAFRD revealed that 20% of respondents knew that they can apply for tenancy grants if the landowner and the applicant are in a marital or bloodline relationship without limits (eg: great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, and so on.) and this is proven through a marriage certificate or birth certificate and/or death certificate. On the other hand, the majority, which is 80% of respondents, stated that they were not aware of this special provision. This insight suggests that there is a segment of the survey population that could potentially benefit from this information if it becomes more widely available.

Figure 49 The knowledge that they can apply for grants in the MAFRD and do not need tenancy if the landowner and the applicant are in a marital relationship or in a direct blood line without limits

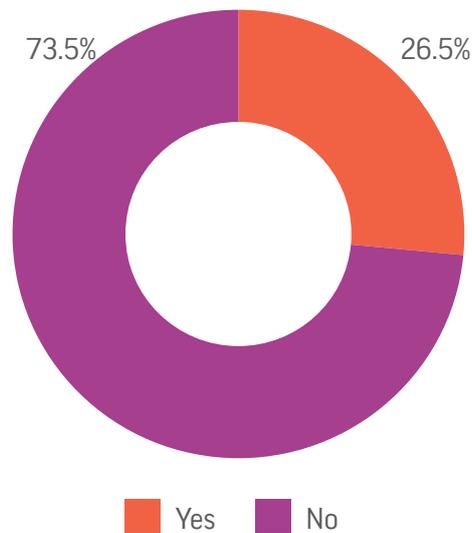
N=400



When asked about awarding additional points to women applicants and/or business owners in the context of agricultural grant applications, the survey results revealed that 26.5% of respondents were aware of this policy, acknowledging that women receive additional points during evaluation process. On the other hand, 73.5% of respondents were not aware of this policy. This disparity highlights different levels of awareness regarding gender-related considerations in the grant application process, which may influence future application strategies.

Figure 50 Knowledge about grants for agriculture, regarding the fact that when applicants and/or business owners are women they earn extra points during the evaluation

N=400



Annex 4. Confirmation letters and Response of the auditees



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo
Qeveria - Vlada - Government

Ministria e Financave, Punës dhe Transfereve
Ministarstvo Finansija, Rada i Transfereta
Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers



AGJENCIA E PUNËSIMIT E REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS
AGENCIJA ZA ZAPOSILJAVANJE REPUBLIKE KOSOVO
EMPLOYMENT AGENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

AGJENCIA E PUNËSIMIT E REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS
AGENCIJA ZA ZAPOSILJAVANJE REPUBLIKE KOSOVO
EMPLOYMENT AGENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO
ZYRA QENDRORE E AGJENCISË - CENTRALNO SEDESTE AGENCIJE
CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE AGENCY

115 15 02 2024

LETËR E KONFIRMIMIT

REPUBLICA E KOSOVËS-REPUBLIKA KOSOVA-REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO			
ZYRA KOMBËTARE E AUDITIMIT			
NACIONALNA KANCELARIJA REVIZIJE / NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE			
DATE: 15-02-2024			
Njësia Org. / Org. Unit	Shif. klasif. / Klassif. Kod	Nr. Prot. / Br. Prot. / Prot. No.	Nr. i faqeve / Br. Stranica / No. Pages
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Për pajtueshmërinë me të gjeturat e Auditorit të Përgjithshëm për raportin e auditimit të performancës **“Barazia gjinore dhe fuqizimi i grave nga zonat rurale përmes përfshirjes së tyre në tregun e punës”**, dhe për zbatimin e rekomandimeve.

Për: Zyrën Kombëtare të Auditimit

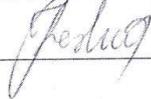
Vendi dhe data: Prishtinë, 15.02.2024

I nderuar,

Përmes kësaj shkrese, konfirmoj se:

- kam pranuar draft raportin e Zyrës Kombëtare të Auditimit **“Barazia gjinore dhe fuqizimi i grave nga zonat rurale përmes përfshirjes së tyre në tregun e punës”** (në tekstin e mëtejshëm “Raporti”);
- pajtohem me të gjeturat dhe rekomandimet dhe nuk kam ndonjë koment për përmbajtjen e Raportit; si dhe
- brenda 30 ditëve nga pranimi i Raportit final, do t’ju dorëzoj një plan të veprimit për implementimin e rekomandimeve, i cili do të përfshijë afatet kohore dhe stafin përgjegjës për implementimin e tyre.

Zv. Drejtori i Përgjithshëm i Agjencisë së Punësimit
Jehona Rexha



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS - REPUBLIKA KOSOVA - REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO ZYRA KOMBËTARE E AUDITIMIT NACIONALNA KANCELARIJA REVIZIJE / NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE			
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 QEVERIA E KOSOVËS / VLADA KOSOVA / GOVERNMENT OF KOSOVA

MINISTERIA BUJQËSISË, PYLLTARISË DHE ZHVILLIMIT RURAL
 MINISTARSTVO POLJOPRIVREDE, SUMARSTVA I RURALNOG RAZVOJA
 MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

LETËR E KONFIRMIMIT

Për pajtueshmërinë me të gjeturat e Auditorit të Përgjithshëm për raportin e auditimit të performancës **“Barazia gjinore dhe fuqizimi i grave nga zonat rurale përmes përfshirjes së tyre në tregun e punës”**, dhe për zbatimin e rekomandimeve.

Për: Zyrën Kombëtare të Auditimit

Vendi dhe data: 26.02.2024

Të nderuar,

Përmes kësaj shkrese, konfirmoj se:

- kam pranuar draft raportin e Zyrës Kombëtare të Auditimit **“Barazia gjinore dhe fuqizimi i grave nga zonat rurale përmes përfshirjes së tyre në tregun e punës”** (në tekstin e mëtejshëm **“Raporti”**);
- pajtohem pjesërisht me të gjeturat dhe rekomandimet dhe nuk kam ndonjë koment për përmbajtjen e Raportit; si dhe
- brenda 30 ditëve nga pranimi i Raportit final, do t’ju dorëzoj një plan të veprimit për implementimin e rekomandimeve, i cili do të përfshijë afatet kohore dhe stafin përgjegjës për implementimin e tyre.

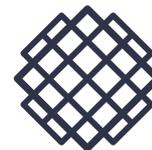
Faton PEÇI

Ministër i Bujqësisë, Pylltarisë dhe Zhvillimit Rural (MBPZHR)





Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova
Republic of Kosovo



Zyra Kombëtare e Auditimit
Nacionalna Kancelarija Revizije
National Audit Office

Audit performed: “Gender equality and empowerment of women from rural areas through their inclusion in the labour market”

Document: Comments of the auditee on the draft audit report

Finding	Agree yes/no	Auditee's comments when not agreed	View of the NAO
Finding 3.2.1	No	The announcement of the call for applications depends on the approval by MAFRD of the program and the AI for the respective year. Meanwhile, ADA is only an implementer of the program.	The finding remains as it has been elaborated that the delays to announce the calls for applications were due to delayed approval of the programs.
Finding 3.2.2	No	<p>ADA has an electronic program in place and is in the process of developing the electronic program for grants so now the exact number of female and male applicants can be identified.</p> <p>All applicants are subject to the same procedures of administrative control and scoring according to the criteria established in the AI for the respective year.</p> <p>The issue concerning the policies for creating favouring conditions between genders lies with MFRD.</p>	<p>The finding remains as the audit scope covered the period 2019-2023 and the situation was the same as described in the report.</p> <p>The finding is aimed at improving the selection system and the objectivity of handling applications during their review according to the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria. The report talks about the details where the system operation has stuck. If ten people in the electronic system have equal scores, the selection of beneficiaries by gender should also be equal, which the evidence has not proven. For example, the lists we received show that only the first five candidates with equal points were named beneficiaries.</p> <p>From the samples tested in the ADA, there are no records of the review of complaints in those files. While the evidence now submitted with the comments prove the review of complaints for cases that were not subject to our testing, it was not selected as a sample.</p>

The complaints review commission is appointed by decision of the Secretary General of the MAFRD. This commission consists of three members from MAFRD and two members from ADA. The members are independent and make decisions according to their free and professional will, applying the applicable laws and by-laws. As for the complaint, it is up to the rejected applicant who has the right to file the complaint up to 30 days from the date of rejection. The commission appointed by decision according to the AI is considered a professional one and each of its decisions is implemented in compliance with the applicable laws and by-laws. While the compliant process against the commission's decisions is filed only at the competent court.

GENDER EQUALITY
AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
FROM RURAL AREAS THROUGH THEIR
INVOLVEMENT IN THE LABOUR MARKET



National Audit Office
Address: Lagjja Arbëria
Rr. Ahmet Krasniqi, 210
10000 Pristina
Republic of Kosovo

