

# GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

Introduction of gender responsive budgeting in the Republic of Serbia  
2008 - 2018



**“INEQUALITY, it turns out, is not an economic necessity: IT IS A DESIGN FAILURE.”**

Kate Raworth

This year marks ten years since the beginning of introduction of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in the Republic of Serbia and there are many reasons to be satisfied. GRB is an integral part of the Budget System Law and institutions at the national, provincial and local level are included in its' implementation. The gradual introduction of this new practice in creation, financing, implementation and monitoring of public policies is supported by national, provincial and local gender equality mechanisms. The process is governed by the Ministry of Finance, Provincial Secretariat of Finance and heads of finance departments at local level, with UN Women technical and expert support.

The Serbian experience has demonstrated that the GRB introduction, as a significant social change towards gender equality, has to be gradual and continuous in order to generate sustainable results. This process entails provision of technical assistance to all target institutions throughout the annual cycle, starting with the issuing of the Annual Plan for GRB, until the adoption of the budgets for the following year. Individuals providing technical support must have broad knowledge of gender equality as well as programme budgeting, be able to see issues through the prism of different sectors, and also capable of providing clear operational guidance and practical advice on GRB introduction to public officials and servants.

#### **GRB definition, Budget System Law, article 2, 58v:**

*Gender responsive budgeting entails gender mainstreaming of the budget process, including gender analysis of the budget and restructuring of income and expenditures in order to advance gender equality.*

#### **Budget objectives, Budget System Law, article 4:**

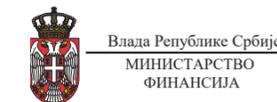
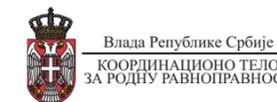
*Budget system should achieve the following: 4) efficient allocation of budget resources with the objective of advancing gender equality.*

## KEY ACTORS

- Ministry of Finance, Republic of Serbia
- Coordination Body for Gender Equality, Government of the Republic of Serbia
- Provincial Secretariat of Finance, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina
- Provincial Secretariat of Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina
- Women's Parliamentary Network, National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia
- Women's Parliamentary Network, Assembly of the AP Vojvodina
- Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM)
- Network of local women's civil society organizations and gender experts
- UN Women

## GRB SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- The Budget System Law
- National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020
- The Gender Sensitive Budget Instructions
- The Annual Plan for GRB Introduction issued by the Minister of Finance and Provincial Secretary of Finance
- The GRB Calendar
- The Annual GRB Progress Report with recommendations for improvement of the process
- Handbook on gender responsive budgeting introduction
- Step by step guidebook on sectoral gender analysis



# 10 YEARS SINCE START OF GRB INTRODUCTION IN SERBIA

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015



Start of preparatory activities and GRB pilot projects in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina under the leadership of the Provincial Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality<sup>1</sup>, with UN Women support.

Shift from line budgeting to program budget enables gender mainstreaming of the programme budgeting at the national level.

## 2008-2015

Civil society organizations and local self-governments include gender perspective in their respective line budgets. The significance of this period is reflected in the development of core knowledge and skills related to GRB, as well as the creation of a base of supporters who were crucial in building up and expanding support over time.

## 2015-2018

Over 900 public sector employees were encompassed by the GRB capacity building programmes at the national, provincial and local level.

Public sector employees further strengthen their GRB-related knowledge and skills through **184 individual mentoring and information sessions** tailored to each institution.

The Ministry of Finance includes GRB in the Budget System Law, and gender equality becomes one of the objectives of the budget.

The Coordination Body for Gender Equality, Ministry of Finance and UN Women establish a highly operational group for support to GRB that is tasked with GRB planning, implementation and monitoring.

**16 national level institutions apply GRB in their respective budgets for 2016.**

## 2016-2018

Three Annual Plans for GRB Introduction issued by the Minister of Finance and Provincial Secretary of Finance.

Three annual GRB progress reports are produced, encompassing institutions at the national and provincial levels.

2016



Introduction of a mandatory gender analysis and reporting on GRB contribute to further strengthening of the legal framework.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 includes GRB as one of the specific objectives for implementation of the Strategic Goal 3, which implies system-wide gender mainstreaming in the policy adoption, implementation and monitoring processes.

The budget planning software in the AP Vojvodina integrates GRB.

**26 institutions at the national level and 10 at provincial level apply GRB in their respective budgets for 2017.**

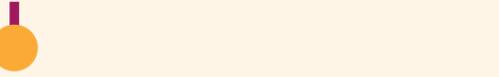
2017



**33 institutions at national and 14 at provincial level apply GRB in their budgets for 2018 through 65 programmers and 93 programme activities.**

Handbook on GRB introduction and Step by step guidebook on sectoral gender analysis are prepared based on empirical evidence aiming to further strengthen the capacities of institutions and enrich the resource base for implementing the reform.

2018



**40 institutions at national and 18 at provincial level are to apply GRB in their budgets for 2019, according to Annual Plan for GRB introduction.**

1. This institution has changed its name and mandate several times over the course of GRB development: Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality (until 2012); Provincial Secretariat for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality (2012-2016); and from 2016, Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality.

## SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES ON A PATH TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY



- General Secretariat of the Government will start to maintain and publish a registry of proposals, mandate take over and appointment of the Government of Serbia officials, in order to contribute to a systematic monitoring of the number of women and men at the highest decision-making levels in the Government.



- National Statistical Office has increased the number of indicators that it reports on disaggregated by sex related to demographic and social statistics.



- Fiscal Council has introduced GRB outcome/impact analysis in addition to regular annual analyses prepared by this institution.



- Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth has defined increased number of both male and female citizens who practice sports, as well as increased number of male and female athletes and experts who achieve top-quality sports results, as gender-responsive objectives in the 2018 budget.



- Provincial Secretariat for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry has conducted sectoral gender analysis in 2017 to define GRB priorities for the next 3 years. Based on the analysis, the Provincial Secretariat has identified that women were underrepresented in access to subsidies in agriculture, which will be considered while planning budgets in the period 2019-2021.



- Provincial Socio-Economic Council will start to monitor the extent to which decisions negotiated by the Council among employers, trade unions and the state take into account impact on the position of female and male workers, respectively.



- State Audit Institution has included verification of GRB implementation among its regular audit activities targeting institutions encompassed by the annual audit plan.



- Ministry of Culture and Information has supported the project "Rock Camp for Girls" in order to contribute to removal of gender stereotypes and strengthening of gender equality.



- Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and Commissioner for Access to Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection will conduct gender analyses of their respective mandates in order to define gender responsive priorities and objectives.



- Public Investment Office will monitor share of public buildings accessible to persons with disabilities in the total number of facilities renovated or refurbished using budget funding.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

- Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Serbia who is also President of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, and Minister of Finance have extended their support to GRB introduction and in this way, they have ensured political endorsement from the highest government level;**

- Provincial Secretary of Finance supports and leads this process at the provincial level;**

- Women's Parliamentary Network plays an important role in emphasizing the importance of GRB introduction, and it has a positive effect on an increased demand for gender mainstreaming in the budget processes at the national, provincial and local levels;**

- The reform is gradual and continuous;**

- Technical assistance is conceptualized to start with ensuring that there is understanding of GRB relevance in planning, implementation and monitoring of budget execution, and to follow up by provision of clear guidance and technical detail clarification regarding the GRB process itself;**

- Technical assistance relies on both local knowledge and international experience;**

- Technical assistance, which includes training and tailored individual institution-based mentorship, is flexible and available;**

- There is a growing community of practice among public sector employees who have direct experience in GRB implementation, which contributes to institutionalization.**