

## Women Entrepreneurs in Energy event, networking and financing opportunities

Webex event on 5 March, 2024

The Webinar brought together 80 participants to tackle the underrepresentation of women in the clean energy sector.

Women continue to be underrepresented as entrepreneurs in the Energy Community Contracting Parties, particularly across energy economies. They are disproportionately affected by major challenges of entering entrepreneurship. Closing these gender gaps can significantly increase the region's growth prospects, as research around the world has shown.

As we stand on the cusp of the energy transition, there is a vast potential to create new entrepreneurial opportunities. Thus, it is imperative to addressing existing challenges now. From structural barriers to financial constraints, technical complexities, and beyond, the webinar underscored the urgent need to cultivate an enabling environment that empowers women entrepreneurs to lead in this dynamic industry.

Although challenges were strongly context dependent, obstacles related to investor's trust and reservation were perceived repeatedly, which seems to be linked to complex factors, such as experience of investors with similar projects, media presence, visibility, and age. An incomplete legislative framework and targeted funding were mentioned another major challenge.

*"Since we are a pioneering cooperative, without precedent in local context, our main challenge is reservation or bewilderment from vested actors - institutions, market actors - towards citizens led energy organisation suddenly appearing on the scene. In this regard, sharing experiences plays a vital role. To that of course connect incomplete legislative framework and financial/support mechanisms." (by Ana Džokić)*

*"One significant hurdle was my young age in the business, which led to initial scepticism from potential collaborators and investors. Overcoming this perception has been an ongoing challenge. Many women have innovative ideas but lack the knowledge to turn ideas into successful ventures. With training the confidence of women and their knowledge on how to start a business could be boosted." (by Gentiana Alija)*

The significance of women's networks was underscored as pivotal, not only for fostering collaboration, training, and mentorship, but also for achieving long-term improvements for future generations. Women in decision-making positions, and thus their networks, play a crucial role in raising awareness and shaping policy development. Considering the impact of the energy sector on all aspects of life, it is essential to ensure that a diversity of value systems is embedded in decision-making processes.

Finally, the critical role of data for informed policy formulation and evidence-based decision making was highlighted, ensuring that progress is monitored with precision.

The webinar concluded with a call to action for stakeholders to collaborate and implement tangible solutions to empower women entrepreneurs in the energy sector.

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## Networking & Partnership opportunities

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**Women in Energy:** aims to increase women's leadership in the energy sector in Hungary and CEE. It offers networking, career development, and leadership programs to empower women professionals, promoting gender diversity for the industry's success and efficiency.

[Women in Energy](#)

**Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET):** promotes women's roles in the energy sector as key change-makers. It supports women entrepreneurs with advocacy, networking, training, and mentorship to contribute to a sustainable energy future.

[Women Entrepreneurs - GWNET](#)

**.Wave:** is an accelerator for startups in Central-Eastern Europe, focusing on eco-sustainability

[.wave | Accelerator Program](#)

**Regional Network of Women in Entrepreneurship:** supports women entrepreneurship in the WBs and incorporates a gender perspective into the promotion of sustainable economic growth

[Women Who Launch](#)

### **Country-specific Networking & Partnership opportunities:**

**The Women Founders Network Albania (WFNA):** supports women entrepreneurs in Albania with events, workshops, and mentoring. It offers an accelerator for women founders and an Investment Readiness Program for startups from Albania and nearby countries.

[WomenFoundersNetworkAlbania](#)

**CEI Nahla:** offers business counselling, mentoring, and networking within its business community. Nahla also provides courses designed to equip women for entrepreneurship.

[Početna - Centar za edukaciju i istraživanje Nahla](#)

**Kosovo Women In Energy and Mining:** Kosovo Women in Energy & Mining is a strategic hub that works to advance gender diversity and inclusion efforts in the energy and mining sectors.

[Kosovo Women in Energy and Mining](#)

**Kosovo Women for Kosovo Women:** offers vocational training and educational programs to enhance women's economic status and leadership skills within their communities and beyond.

[Kosovo Women for Women](#)

**Startup Macedonia:** platform that provides support, networking, and expert advice to start-ups.

[Startup Macedonia](#)

**National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship North Macedonia:** seeks to consolidate existing networks into a unified platform supporting women entrepreneurs across all levels.

[National Platform for Women EN | \(weplatform.mk\)](#)

**Montenegro Employers Federations:** representative body for employers, encompassing entrepreneurs, SMEs, large enterprises, local and sectoral employers' associations, and NGOs.  
[Unija poslodavaca Crne Gore](#)

**Union of Young Entrepreneurs of Montenegro:** provides support to young entrepreneurs from Montenegro through various training, programs, activities and networking.  
[umpcg.me](#)

**Business centre BSC Bar:** helps to create a favourable environment for economic development by encouraging development of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises.  
[BSC BAR](#)

**Networking Opportunities for Women in Georgia:** [Networking Opportunities for Women-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**WISE Serbia:** promotes women's participation in the energy sector, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.  
[WISE SRBIJA](#)

**Entrepreneurship Portal:** gives an overview of three different programs supporting start-ups, development and innovation, digitization and the green economy  
[Портал предузетништва](#)

**Women in Business Moldova:** offers financial and non-financial support, including grants for investments and relevant services to help women develop their businesses.  
[Women in Business](#)

**Business Support Centres Ukraine:** business advice services, trainings and workshops.  
[Мережа Центрів Інформаційної Підтримки Бізнесу](#)

**Gender Culture Centres Ukraine:** offering resources, consultations, and training to improve business effectiveness and expansion into EU markets.  
[Центр розвитку малого та середнього бізнесу](#)

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## *Financing Opportunities*

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**WEgate:** initiative designed to support and empower women entrepreneurs across Europe by providing access to a wide range of resources, networking opportunities, and information.  
[WEgate - WEgate](#)

**Enterprise Europe Network:** provides targeted support for women entrepreneurs with a focus on business collaboration, market expansion, local networking, and EU funding access, extending across Europe and beyond.  
[Enterprise Europe Network | Enterprise Europe Network \(europa.eu\)](#)

**Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-fi):** supports women entrepreneurs by scaling up access to financial products and services, building capacity, expanding networks, offering mentors, and providing opportunities to link with domestic and global markets  
[Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative](#)

**European Bank of Reconstruction and Development – Women in Business program:**

supports women-led SMEs with finance, business advice, training, and support to foster growth.

[EBRD Women in Business Programme](#)

**Private Small Business Grants for Women:** [APPLY NOW FOR AN AMBER GRANT](#)

**The UNDP Gender Equality Fund (GEF):** supports projects that promote gender equality, including projects that support women entrepreneurs.

[Projects | GEF \(thegef.org\)](#)

**EIT Climate-KIC:** supports the development and growth of climate-positive businesses, offering a comprehensive pathway from idea generation to scaling up innovation.

[Entrepreneurship - Climate-KIC](#)

**SynergistEIC:** initiative supporting greentech startups to increase their competitiveness and success in the EIC Accelerator. It offers tailored support, including up to €50,000 in grants, through an accelerator program and access to the EU innovation network.

[SynergistEIC](#)

**Climate Investment fund:** aids climate-smart projects in vulnerable low and middle-income countries, offering affordable, long-term financing to achieve climate objectives.

[The Climate Investment Funds \(CIF\)](#)

**List with all European Accelerator Programs:** [Impact Accelerators in Europe in 2024](#)

**Country-specific financing programs:**

**Women in Energy Kosovo\*:** provides technical assistance and grants to women-owned businesses for energy efficiency and renewable projects, targeting diverse investment needs.

[Women In Energy - Millennium Foundation Kosovo](#)

**AIDA:** focuses on encouraging direct investments in Albania, boosting SME competitiveness, and assisting in the export of goods and services.

[Homepage - AIDA](#)

**EU4Innovation Albania:** focuses on enhancing the capacity of innovators, startups, and innovation support organizations through various programs, mentoring, and financial support.

[EU for Innovation](#)

**Fund for Innovations and Technology Development in North Macedonia:** supports innovation and technology growth to spur economic development and job creation, offering programs and investments to nurture an entrepreneurial environment.

[Mission and goals](#)

**Investment and Development Fund of Montenegro:** program for the improvement of female entrepreneurship, Micro loans to support women in business

[Investiciono-razvojni fond Crne Gore A.D.](#)

**Guarantee Fund of AP Vojvodina:** provides financial support through guarantees and loans to enterprises and entrepreneurs in Vojvodina

[Гаранцијски фонд АПВ – гаранције/кредити \(garfond.rs\)](http://garfond.rs)