

BUSINESS PROFILES: Women and Minority Entrepreneurship in Kosovo



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List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
GAP	GAP Institute
IEEA	Inclusive Economic Engagement Activity
KAS	Kosovo Statistics Agency
KBRA	Kosovo Business Registration Agency
MIET	Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TAK	Tax Administration of Kosovo

Executive Summary

The number of women and minority entrepreneurs in Kosovo has been increasing in the last few years. However, they remain underrepresented in the Kosovo entrepreneurship scene. This report provides the updated profiles of women-owned and minority-owned businesses, including the size of these businesses, their primary economic activity, and region of operation. Moreover, it provides data on the lifespan of women-owned businesses. Out of the total 227,759 registered businesses from 2000 to March 2023, 96,995 businesses¹ have been analyzed to create a snapshot of these businesses compared to the majority men-owned businesses². Findings of the analysis suggest that women-owned businesses are concentrated in wholesale and retail trade (27%), service activities (17.1%), and manufacturing (12.4%), while sectors such as mining and quarrying (0.1%), water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (0.1%), activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods- and services-producing (0.006%), and activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies (0.006%) have the smallest portion of women-owned businesses. Minority-owned businesses are focused on wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (27.7%), manufacturing (13.7%), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (10.4%), and are mostly located in Prishtina, Prizren, and Gracanica.

Key statistics:

- According to KBRA data, there are 96,995 active businesses (excluding public enterprises) as of March 2023. Out of these, 78.7% are owned by men, 18% are owned by women, 2.3% are co-owned by at least one woman, for the other 1% the gender of the owner is unknown³.
- Micro, small, and medium businesses compose 99% of the total number of women-owned businesses in Kosovo.
- 97.7% of women-owned businesses are micro businesses with nine or less employees, 1.5% are small businesses with 10 to 49 employees, and 0.2% are businesses with 50 to 249 employees. Currently, there are no large businesses with more than 250 employees owned by women.
- The municipalities with the largest gender inequality gap when it comes to the number of men-owned and women-owned businesses are Dragash (90.1% of businesses are owned by men and only 9.5% are owned by women), Malisheva (85.5% of businesses are owned by men and only 13.5% are owned by women), and Rahovec (85% of businesses are owned by men and only 13.5% are owned by women). On the other hand, the municipality with the most gender equal division in terms of business ownership is Partesh (52.6% of businesses are owned by men and 47.4% are owned by women). The most common primary activity among women-owned businesses is retail trade in non-specialized stores, where food, beverages and tobacco predominate; followed by retail trade of textiles in specialized stores, and service activities.
- 5,253 businesses⁴ are owned by individuals of ethnic minority communities in Kosovo; 30% are owned by Serbs, 29% are owned by Turkish, 10.6% are owned by Bosniaks, 2.7% are owned by Gorans, 2% are owned by Ashkali, 1.7% are owned by Roma, 1.7% are owned by Egyptians, 0.1% are owned by Montenegrins, and 22.2% are not categorized.
- Out of the total number of minority-owned businesses, 79% are owned by men, and 21% are owned by women.
- There are 33,003 deregistered businesses in total in Kosovo from 2000 to March 2023, in comparison to the 227,759 registered businesses in total. Out of these businesses, 64%

¹ Retrieved from KBRA through data requests for the total number of active businesses operating in Kosovo.

² KBRA, [Basic Performance Indicators Report on Business Registration in Kosovo for the Period: January – March 2023](#).

³ In cases where the gender of the owner is unknown it may have occurred that the applicant did not specify the gender, KBRA did not register it, or the owner is another business organization (legal entity) therefore the gender is not specified.

⁴ All types of businesses described in Annex 1 are reflected.

were owned by men, 12% were owned by women, 0.3% were co-owned by at least one woman, and for 23.7% the gender of the owner(s) is unknown.

- The analysis of 3,801 deregistered women-owned businesses suggests that the average lifespan for women-owned businesses is 4.36 years, which is shorter than the average lifespan of 8.6 years for men-owned businesses.
- The women-owned businesses with the lowest average lifespan were operating in the sectors: public administration and defense, compulsory social security (2 years); agriculture, forestry and fishing (2.32 years); and real estate activities (2.33). The women-owned businesses with the highest lifespan were operating in the sectors: wholesale and retail trade (6.71 years), and transportation and storage (6.53 years).

Understanding the landscape and profiles of women-owned and minority-owned businesses can help the government and other stakeholders to design and implement policies and programs that support these categories adequately. Specifically, such data can inform the decision-making authorities, donors, civil society, and other stakeholders on the absorption capacities of the businesses, on properly designing training and mentoring programs', increasing their participation in procurement opportunities, and more.

1. Background information

Entrepreneurship is recognized as a crucial factor for both economic development and sustainability. By creating job opportunities, entrepreneurs not only benefit themselves and their employees but also have positive effects on their investors, suppliers, and communities. However, women entrepreneurs are still underrepresented, with fewer women than men starting businesses. Women and minority-owned businesses tend to be smaller and are more likely to operate in low-value sectors. Many of them operate in the informal economy, due to barriers such as limited access to credit, information, markets and technology, along with family responsibilities and social norms⁵. Nonetheless, the private sector plays a crucial role in promoting job creation and enhancing living standards, making it essential for women to engage actively in economic activities⁶. Encouraging inclusive entrepreneurship can allow economies to leverage the potential and ideas of women and individuals from minority communities in the labor market⁷.

An increased number of women entrepreneurs tends to have a positive effect on the employment opportunities of women and minorities. Different reports show that women-owned businesses tend to hire more women and minority employees⁸, and conduct business with women-owned vendors and suppliers⁹.

Kosovo's high official unemployment rate, estimated by the Kosovo Statistics Agency (KAS) was 20.7 percent in 2021¹⁰. According to KAS, unemployment was highest among women at 25% in 2021, compared to men at 19%. A large informal economy exists in Kosovo which may not always be captured in official data, particularly in the agriculture sector. Out of the employed women, 4.9% of them had the employment status of self-employed with employees compared to 10.8% of men¹¹. Women are mainly employed in the education, trade and health care sectors with 51.8%, while men are mainly employed in the trade, construction and manufacturing sectors with 41.8%¹².

5 Kosovo Women's Network. [Gender-Based Discrimination and Labour in Western Balkans, 2022](#).

6 World Bank Group. [Women, Business and the Law 2023](#), Riinvest Institute. [Women's Entrepreneurship: An Analysis on Doing Business in Kosovo, 2017](#).

7 Ibid.

8 McManus, Michael J. [Women's Business Ownership: Data from the 2012 Survey of Business Owners, 2017](#).

9 [State of Women-Owned Businesses, 2019](#), American Express.

10 Kosovo Agency of Statistics. [Labor Force Survey \(LFS\) in Kosovo, 2021](#).

11 Kosovo Agency of Statistics. [Social Statistics – indicators of education and labor market by gender, 2023](#).

12 Ibid.

In a study conducted by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, it was found that women entrepreneurs are more likely to start businesses in the service sector, such as healthcare, education, and hospitality. These businesses tend to be smaller in size and often operate in the informal sector. The study also found that women-owned businesses tend to have fewer employees and generate lower revenue compared to those owned by men¹³. Similar findings stay true for Kosovo as well. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), women entrepreneurs in Kosovo are primarily concentrated in the service sector, including healthcare, education, and retail. They are also active in creative industries such as fashion, design, and crafts. Many women entrepreneurs in Kosovo operate with small and micro-businesses, but there are also some who have started larger companies and are expanding into international markets¹⁴. Despite a well-established financial sector in Kosovo, which is dominated by the banking sector, access to bank loans for micro, small and medium-sized businesses remains limited due to the high interest rates, high collateral requirements, and relative unwillingness by banks to finance new projects by micro and small sized businesses and start-ups¹⁵.

Similarly to women-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses can play a significant role in promoting economic growth and development, as well as contributing to the social and cultural diversity of Kosovo. By supporting and promoting the growth of these businesses, Kosovo can create more inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities for all its citizens.

1.1. Methodology

The analysis utilized both primary and secondary data sources. GAP Institute has obtained data from the Kosovo Businesses Registration Agency (KBRA) in the framework of Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade (MIET) for women-owned businesses, the economic sector they operate in, the region, and the size of these businesses. Additionally, data was obtained from Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK); however, these lacked full gender and minority segregation. This was done in order to provide a comparison and ensure the credibility of the data. Since the data from TAK lacked gender and ethnicity segregation, for this analysis GAP utilized only the data from KBRA. Out of the total number of registered businesses from 2000 to March 2023, which is 227,759, the number of businesses that fail to provide updated information is subtracted. This subtraction yields the number of active businesses, as determined by KBRA, which is 96,995. However, it is important to note that these figures do not match with other available data, such as from TAK, which has provided GAP with a list of 115,381 active businesses from 2000 to March 2023¹⁶. Similarly, the same report from KAS provides two different numbers for active businesses. According to this report, there were 74,658 active businesses in Kosovo in 2021, a number which they retrieved from TAK¹⁷. The OECD data (42,881 in 2020) also differs from the aforementioned figures. The mismatch in data leads to errors and data biases as the exact number of the total population for current active businesses remains unknown.

As per the minority-owned businesses, it was more difficult to obtain any data as there is no information available online, however GAP obtained this data from KBRA through MIET Communications Department.

¹³ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. [Women's Entrepreneurship 2018/2019](#).

¹⁴ OECD. [Competitiveness in South East Europe 2021: Kosovo Profile](#).

¹⁵ World Bank. [Kosovo Financial Sector Assessment Program: Phase 1 and Phase 2](#). World Bank Group, 2018.

¹⁶ GAP obtained this data directly from TAK through data request.

¹⁷ KAS. [Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo, 2022](#).

GAP has processed these datasets (lacking full gender segregation) and created an overview of where women-owned and minority-owned businesses focus more on, as well as these businesses' lifespan. This has been done by categorizing all data entries into three categories "women-owned", "co-owned by women", and "men-owned" in order to provide a comparison. Since not all data entries were gender-disaggregated, GAP looked up more than 3,000 entries individually in the KBRA online platform to identify the gender of the owner(s). Moreover, GAP has also used a literature review from official government reports and available data online on the most recent developments in women and minority entrepreneurship in Kosovo.

1.2. Gender-disaggregated data

Kosovo institutions do not systematically collect and maintain gender-disaggregated data to inform fiscal policies and resource allocation. Even if they do so, the numbers are usually not aligned and there is a mismatch in their data. This includes the Tax Administration of Kosovo as well. GAP used the data obtained from TAK in order to compare them with the data from KBRA and to create a more credible snapshot of the business environment in Kosovo for women and minorities. TAK has a more updated database since every business is obliged to declare its profit (even if the turnover is 0) annually. However, the TAK data lacked full gender segregation which hindered the research process. Although the Law on gender equality obliges every institution in Kosovo to implement legislative and other measures in order to prevent and eliminate gender discrimination and achieve gender equality, including "gender division of all data and collected statistical information shall be recorded registered, processed and shall be obliged to submit these data to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics"¹⁸, few gender-disaggregated data are available regarding the business climate in Kosovo. This Law also provides punitive sanctions for the violation of Article 5: "Fine of 300 to 500 Euros will be imposed for violation to the person responsible as per Article 5 subparagraph 1.8 of this Law, if not collected, recorded and processed statistical data divided by gender and do not submit to Kosovo Agency of Statistics"¹⁹.

When it comes to ethnic minority groups, the weight of intersectionality²⁰ is added. There is no official data on employment for the individuals of minority groups. While there is no data publicly available for businesses, GAP managed to obtain gender-disaggregated data for businesses owned by individuals of ethnic minority groups through data requests.

2. Trends of active businesses in Kosovo

According to KBRA, there are 96,995 active businesses registered in the period from 2000 to March 2023. Out of the total active businesses, 53,146 (54.8%) are individual businesses, 42,513 (43.8%) are limited liabilities companies (L.L.C), 576 (0.59%) are general partnerships, 465 (0.48%) branches of foreign business organizations, 231 (0.24%) are joint stock companies (J.S.C.), 49 (0.05%) agriculture cooperatives, 11 (0.01%) other enterprises under the jurisdiction of Kosovo Trust Agency, and 4 (0.004%) social enterprises (types of businesses are explained in Annex 1)

¹⁸ [Law No. 05/L-01 on gender equality, article 5, par. 1.8.](#)

¹⁹ Ibid, article 23, par. 5.

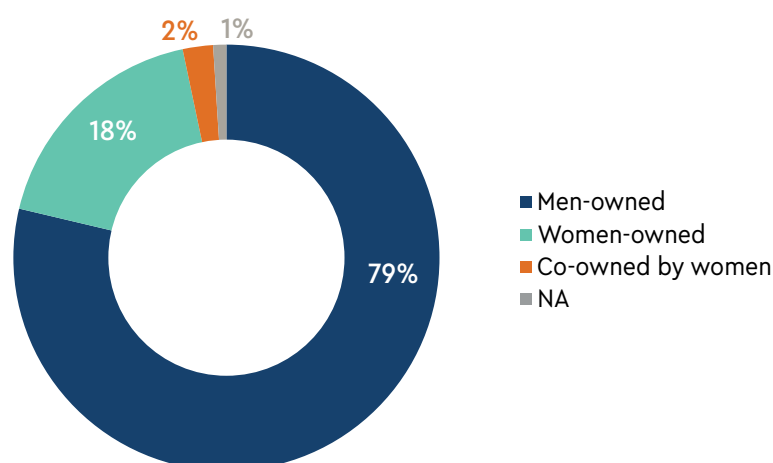
²⁰ The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

Table 1. Types of businesses, by gender of the owner and co-owners

	Men-owned		Women-owned		Co-owned by men and women		Unknown		Total
Individual businesses	42,204	79.4%	10,942	20.6%	0		0		53,146
Branches of foreign business organizations	126	27%	0		0		339	73%	465
Agriculture cooperatives	22	45%	5	10%	22	45%	0		49
Social enterprises	4	100%	0		0		0		4
Other enterprises under the jurisdiction of Kosovo Trust Agency	5	100%	0		0		0		5
Limited partnerships	4	66.66%	0		1	16.66%	1	16.66%	6
General partnerships	422	73.3%	20	3.5%	129	22.4%	5	0.9%	576
Joint stock companies	174	75.3%	8	3.5%	21	9.1%	28	12%	231
Limited liabilities companies	33,364	78.5%	6,440	15.1%	2,111	5%	598	1.4%	42,513
Total	76,325	78.7%	17,415	18%	2,284	2.3%	971	1%	96,995

Source: KBRA

The data obtained from KBRA and categorized by gender shows that out of the total number of active businesses operating in Kosovo, 76,325 (78.7%) are owned by men, 17,415 (18%) are owned by women, 2,284 (2.3%) are co-owned by at least one woman, and for 971 (1%) of the businesses, the gender of the owner is unknown.

Figure 1. Total number of active businesses, by gender of the owner

Source: KBRA

The biggest number of active businesses (26.9%) is located in Prishtina, followed by Prizren (8.7.0%) (see Table 2). The municipalities with the largest gender inequality gap when it comes to the number of men-owned and women-owned businesses are Dragash (90.1% of businesses are owned by men and only 9.5% are owned by women), Malisheva (85.5% of businesses are owned by men and only 13.5% are owned by women), and Rahovec (85% of businesses are owned by men and only 13.5% are owned by women). Whereas the municipality with the most equal divide is Partesh (52.6% of businesses are owned by men and 47.4% are owned by women), even though, businesses from this municipality represent only 0.04% of the total active businesses in Kosovo.

Table 2. Number of active businesses, by municipality, gender of the owner, and women co-owners

	Men-owned		Women-owned		Co-owned by women		Unknown		Total
Decan	773	76.0%	227	22.3%	14	1.4%	3	0.3%	1,017
Dragash	723	90.1%	76	9.5%	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	802
Ferizaj	6,342	80.2%	1,309	16.6%	136	1.7%	28	0.4%	7,815
Fushe Kosova	2,607	76.8%	655	19.3%	94	2.8%	38	1.1%	3,394
Gjakova	3,424	76.6%	947	21.2%	70	1.6%	30	0.7%	4,471
Glllogoc	1,635	80.3%	361	17.7%	29	1.4%	10	0.5%	2,035
Gjilan	4,552	79.8%	1,025	18.0%	105	1.8%	20	0.4%	5,702
Gracanica	863	75.6%	192	16.8%	51	4.5%	36	3.2%	1,142
Hani i Elezit	261	80.1%	61	18.7%	2	0.6%	2	0.6%	326
Istog	1,212	79.6%	287	18.9%	20	1.3%	3	0.2%	1,522
Junik	56	83.6%	10	14.9%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%	67
Kacanik	1,042	82.2%	212	16.7%	12	0.9%	2	0.2%	1,268
Kamenica	1,086	80.5%	245	18.2%	14	1.0%	4	0.3%	1,349
Klina	1,187	80.9%	265	18.1%	14	1.0%	1	0.1%	1,467
Klllokot	45	76.3%	11	18.6%	2	3.4%	1	1.7%	59
Leposaviq	195	80.6%	43	17.8%	2	0.8%	2	0.8%	242
Lipjan	2,120	83.8%	343	13.6%	51	2.0%	16	0.6%	2,530
Malisheva	1,309	85.5%	206	13.5%	13	0.8%	3	0.2%	1,531
Mamusha	114	70.8%	45	28.0%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	161
Mitrovica	2,820	79.8%	650	18.4%	45	1.3%	19	0.5%	3,534
North Mitrovica	252	72.2%	92	26.4%	3	0.9%	2	0.6%	349
Novobrda	137	74.5%	46	25.0%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	184
Obiliq	721	81.1%	137	15.4%	22	2.5%	9	1.0%	889
Partesh	20	52.6%	18	47.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	38
Peja	4,399	77.9%	1,147	20.3%	87	1.5%	17	0.3%	5,650
Podujeva	2,575	83.2%	468	15.1%	44	1.4%	7	0.2%	3,094
Prishtina	19,471	74.5%	4,850	18.6%	1,179	4.5%	629	2.4%	26,129
Prizren	6,690	79.3%	1,569	18.6%	139	1.6%	42	0.5%	8,440
Rahovec	1,551	85.0%	246	13.5%	20	1.1%	7	0.4%	1,824
Ranillug	26	70.3%	10	27.0%	1	2.7%	0	0.0%	37
Shterpca	240	68.8%	98	28.1%	6	1.7%	5	1.4%	349
Shtime	833	84.3%	147	14.9%	5	0.5%	3	0.3%	988
Skenderaj	1,020	78.1%	267	20.4%	13	1.0%	6	0.5%	1,306
Suhareka	1,978	81.9%	397	16.4%	30	1.2%	11	0.5%	2,416
Viti	1,576	83.7%	281	14.9%	24	1.3%	3	0.2%	1,884
Vushtrri	2,259	83.3%	414	15.3%	29	1.1%	10	0.4%	2,712
Zubin Potok	86	81.1%	19	17.9%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	106
Zvecan	125	75.3%	39	23.5%	1	0.6%	1	0.6%	166
Total	76,325		17,415		2,284		971		96,995

Source: KBRA

According to a report by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) represent about 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide²¹. In addition, MSMEs are responsible for a substantial portion of economic output, accounting for up to 40% of national GDP in some countries. However, this may differ between developing and developed countries. In Kosovo, the MSMEs represent 99% of the businesses in Kosovo, with only 1% of the businesses being classified as large businesses. Table 3 shows the segregation of businesses by gender of the owner and co-owner for each size of the business. Micro are the businesses with up to nine employees, small are those with 10 to 49 employees, medium are those with 50 to 249 employees, large are the businesses with 250 or more employees, and unknown are the businesses for which the number of employees is not available on the data obtained from KBRA.

Table 3. Number of active businesses, by size, gender of the owner, and co-owner.

Type of business	Men-owned		Women-owned		Co-owned by women		Unknown		Total
Micro	74,219	78.6%	17,232	18.3%	2,105	2.2%	814	0.9%	94,370
Small	1,418	82.1%	98	5.7%	118	6.8%	94	5.4%	1,728
Medium	214	72.5%	8	2.7%	33	11.2%	40	13.6%	295
Large	33	66.0%	0	0.0%	6	12.0%	11	22.0%	50
Unknown	441	79.9%	77	13.9%	22	4.0%	12	2.2%	552
Total	76,325		17,415		2,284		971		96,995

Source: KBRA

2.1. Insights on women-owned businesses

According to official data, women-owned businesses are more concentrated in wholesale and retail trade, service activities, and manufacturing. The sectors with the smallest portion of women-owned businesses are mining and quarrying, activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing, activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies, water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities, and transportation and storage. A similar trend is observed in the number of businesses where at least one of the owners is a woman.

²¹ World Bank. [Small and Medium Enterprises \(SMEs\) Finance](#).

Table 4. Women-owned businesses and businesses co-owned by women, by economic sector²²

	Women-owned		Co-owned by women	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
A – Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,119	6.5%	86	3.8%
B – Mining and quarrying	24	0.1%	12	0.5%
C – Manufacturing	2,164	12.4%	288	12.6%
D – Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	19	0.1%	14	0.6%
E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	21	0.1%	15	0.7%
F – Construction	465	2.7%	135	5.9%
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	4,712	27.0%	530	23.2%
H – Transportation and storage	199	1.1%	54	2.4%
I – Accommodation and food service activities	1,265	7.3%	180	7.9%
J – Information and communication	516	3.0%	171	7.5%
K – Financial and insurance activities	126	0.7%	30	1.3%
L – Real estate activities	90	0.5%	41	1.8%
M – Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,531	8.8%	325	14.2%
N – Administrative and support service activities	656	3.8%	103	4.5%
O – Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	45	0.3%	11	0.5%
P – Education	517	3.0%	62	2.7%
Q – Human health and social work activities	720	4.1%	127	5.6%
R – Arts, entertainment and recreation	236	1.4%	41	1.8%
S – Other service activities	2,988	17.1%	58	2.5%
T – Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services- producing activities of households for own use	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
U – Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Other	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	17,415	100.0%	2,284	100.0%

Source: KBRA

The analysis suggests that some of the most common primary activities of women-owned businesses are retail trade in non-specialized stores, where food, beverages, and tobacco predominate; retail trade of clothing in specialized stores; other retail trade, not in shops, stalls, or markets; restaurants and food service activities; other processing and preservation of fruits and vegetables; hair salons and other beauty treatments; retail trade of pharmaceutical articles in specialized stores; and production of fresh bread, buns and cakes, among others.

²² Note that the calculations are proxies as there are 971 entries with unknown gender of the owner(s).

Figure 2. Number of women-owned active businesses, by municipality

Source: KBRA

Out of the total 17,415 of active women-owned businesses in Kosovo, 17,232 (98.9%) are micro businesses with 9 or less employees, 98 (0.6%) are small businesses with 10 to 49 employees, 8 (0.05%) are medium businesses with 50 to 249 employees, and none of the active women-owned businesses are large businesses with 250 or more employees.

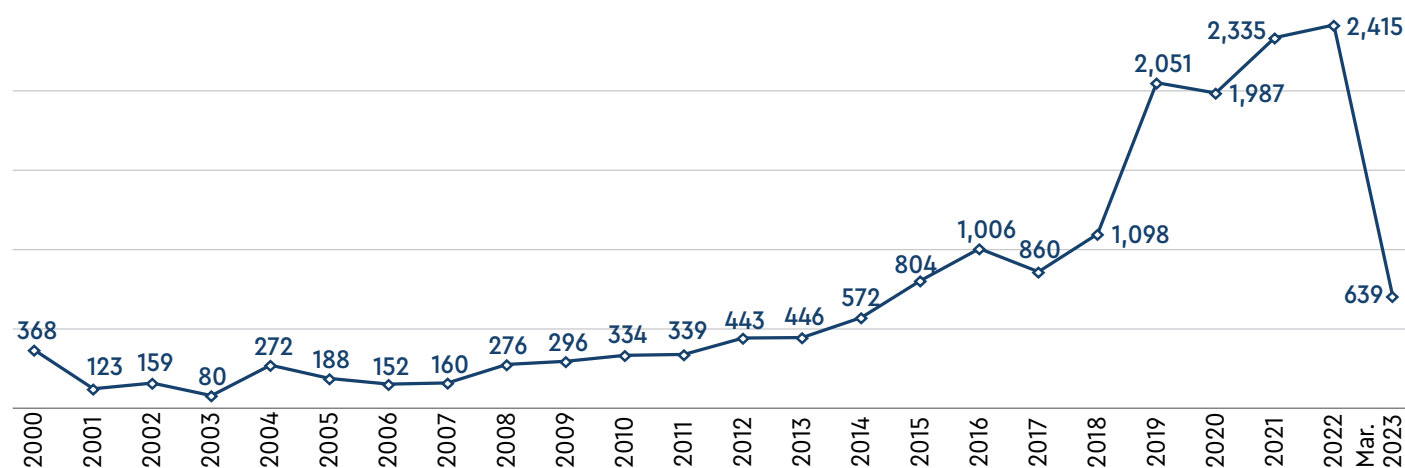
Table 5. Number of active women-owned businesses by size

Size of the business	Women-owned	%
Micro	17,232	98.9%
Small	98	0.6%
Medium	8	0.0%
Large	0	0.0%
Unknown	77	0.4%
Total	17,415	100%

Source: KBRA

Figure 3 shows the number of women-owned businesses registered each year from 2000 to 2022 that are currently active. The data for 2023 includes the women-owned businesses registered in January, February, and March 2023, and the number is expected to increase towards the end of the year. As depicted, the number of women-owned businesses has increased progressively in the last decade. This number has increased significantly in the period of 2018–2019 and there has also been an increase during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2022. The latter can be explained through the registration of the businesses in order to benefit from the economic measures of the Government of Kosovo as a response to the pandemic²³.

Figure 3. Number of new active women-owned businesses registered from 2000 to March 2023



Source: KBRA

2.2. Insights on minority-owned businesses

Based on data from KBRA, there is a total of 5,253 businesses currently operating in Kosovo, which are owned by individuals from ethnic minority communities. Out of this total, 1,083 (21%) businesses are owned by women and 4,170 (79%) are owned by men. Table 6 shows the segregation of these businesses for each ethnic community by gender of the owner.

Table 6. Number of active minority-owned businesses, by gender

Source: KBRA

Ethnicity	Men-owned	Women-owned	Total
Serb	1,141 (72%)	440 (28%)	1,581
Turk	1,257 (83%)	251 (17%)	1,508
Bosniak	408 (73%)	149 (27%)	557
Goran	120 (84%)	23 (16%)	143
Ashkali	84 (80%)	21 (20%)	105
Roma	69 (74%)	24 (16%)	93
Egyptian	56 (62%)	35 (38%)	91
Montenegrin	7 (100%)	0	7
Other	1,028 (88%)	140 (22%)	1,168
Total	4,170 (79%)	1,083 (21%)	5,253

²³ EkonomiaOnline. [Opening new businesses in the pandemic, a fight for survival, 2021.](#)

Similar to the overall business trends in Kosovo, women are underrepresented among ethnic minority business owners. Women of minority groups own 21% of the minority-owned businesses, while men own 79%.

Figure 4. Total number of active minority-owned businesses, by gender



Source: KBRA

A large number of minority-owned businesses (27.7%) are focused on wholesale and retail, followed by manufacturing, and agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Table 7 presents gender-disaggregated data showcasing the portion of minority women-owned businesses compared to minority men-owned for each sector of the economy.

Table 7. Number of active minority-owned businesses by sector and gender of the owner

Sector of the economy	Women-owned		Men-owned		Total	
A – Agriculture, forestry and fishing	177	32%	370	68%	547	10.40%
B – Mining and quarrying	2	7%	25	93%	27	0.50%
C – Manufacturing	160	22%	563	78%	723	13.70%
D – Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1	2%	54	98%	55	1.00%
E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1	3%	35	97%	36	0.60%
F – Construction	31	8%	335	92%	366	6.90%
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	263	18%	1,194	82%	1,457	27.70%
H – Transportation and storage	8	6%	133	94%	141	2.70%
I – Accommodation and food service activities	88	21%	341	79%	429	8.10%
J – Information and communication	46	16%	246	84%	292	5.50%
K – Financial and insurance activities	5	11%	40	89%	45	0.80%
L – Real estate activities	6	9%	58	91%	64	1.20%
M – Professional, scientific and technical activities	76	20%	306	80%	382	7.20%
N – Administrative and support service activities	42	22%	148	78%	190	3.60%
O – Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	3	30%	7	70%	10	0.20%
P – Education	11	20%	43	80%	54	1.00%
Q – Human health and social work activities	37	28%	97	72%	134	2.50%
R – Arts, entertainment and recreation	23	26%	67	74%	90	1.70%
S – Other service activities	103	49%	108	51%	211	4.00%
Total	1,083	21%	4,170	79%	5,253	100%

Source: MIET

Women entrepreneurs from ethnic minority communities in Kosovo own businesses that are mostly focused on wholesale and retail trade; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and manufacturing, a similar trend to the total women-owned businesses.

Table 8. Number of businesses owned by women of ethnic minority groups, by sector of the economy

Sector of the economy	Share of women-owned businesses
A – Agriculture, forestry and fishing	16.30%
B – Mining and quarrying	0.20%
C – Manufacturing	14.80%
D – Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.10%
E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0.10%
F – Construction	2.90%
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	24.30%
H – Transportation and storage	0.70%
I – Accommodation and food service activities	8.10%
J – Information and communication	4.20%
K – Financial and insurance activities	0.50%
L – Real estate activities	0.60%
M – Professional, scientific and technical activities	7.00%
N – Administrative and support service activities	3.90%
O – Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	0.30%
P – Education	1.00%
Q – Human health and social work activities	3.40%
R – Arts, entertainment and recreation	2.10%
S – Other service activities	9.50%
Total	100%

Source: MIET

In Kosovo, 97.9% of minority-owned businesses are micro businesses with nine or less employees, 1.8% of these businesses are small with 10 to 49 employees, 0.2% are medium with 50 to 249 employees, and only 0.1% are classified as large with more than 250 employees.

Table 9. Number of minority owned businesses by size of the business and gender of the owner

Source: MIET

# of employees	Size	Women-owned		Men-owned		Total	
0–9	Micro	1,071	21%	4,073	79%	5,144	97.9%
10–49	Small	10	11%	82	89%	92	1.8%
50–249	Medium	2	18%	9	82%	11	0.2%
250–	Large	0	0%	6	100%	6	0.1%
Total		1,083	21%	4,170	79%	5,253	100%

Women-owned minority businesses are mostly micro businesses with nine or less employees, with only 0.9% being small and 0.2% being medium with 50 to 249 employees. The majority of minority-owned businesses are located in Prishtina and Prizren.

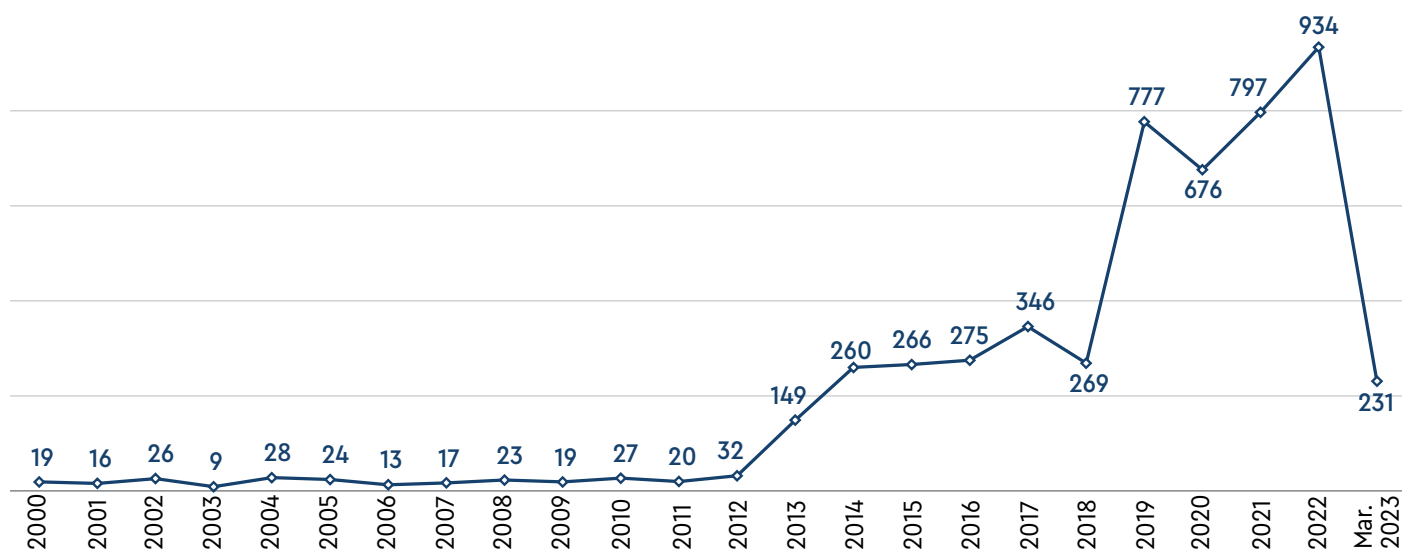
Table 10. Number of minority-owned businesses by municipality and gender of the owner

Municipality	Women-owned		Men-owned		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Prishtina	166	15.3%	1,102	26.4%	1,268	24.1%
Prizren	260	24.0%	941	22.6%	1,201	22.9%
Graçanica	97	9.0%	277	6.6%	374	7.1%
North Mitrovica	76	7.0%	203	4.9%	279	5.3%
Leposaviq	37	3.4%	174	4.2%	211	4.0%
Shterpca	59	5.4%	92	2.2%	151	2.9%
Zveçan	35	3.2%	114	2.7%	149	2.8%
Ferizaj	21	1.9%	126	3.0%	147	2.8%
Mamusha	43	4.0%	101	2.4%	144	2.7%
Gjilan	25	2.3%	117	2.8%	142	2.7%
Fushe Kosova	19	1.8%	94	2.3%	113	2.2%
Dragash	19	1.8%	94	2.3%	113	2.2%
Mitrovica	12	1.1%	83	2.0%	95	1.8%
Gjakova	22	2.0%	71	1.7%	93	1.8%
Peja	13	1.2%	76	1.8%	89	1.7%
Zubin Potok	12	1.1%	62	1.5%	74	1.4%
Lipjan	6	0.6%	58	1.4%	64	1.2%
Istog	19	1.8%	41	1.0%	60	1.1%
Kamenica	21	1.9%	38	0.9%	59	1.1%
Novobrda	16	1.5%	41	1.0%	57	1.1%
Obiliq	13	1.2%	30	0.7%	43	0.8%
Vushtrri	10	0.9%	33	0.8%	43	0.8%
Ranillug	16	1.5%	21	0.5%	37	0.7%
Viti	7	0.6%	26	0.6%	33	0.6%
Klina	17	1.6%	16	0.4%	33	0.6%
Partesh	15	1.4%	14	0.3%	29	0.6%
Podujeva	5	0.5%	21	0.5%	26	0.5%
Suhareka	4	0.4%	17	0.4%	21	0.4%
Klllokot	6	0.6%	12	0.3%	18	0.3%
Kaçanik	1	0.1%	15	0.4%	16	0.3%
Rahovec	3	0.3%	12	0.3%	15	0.3%
Glllogoc	1	0.1%	14	0.3%	15	0.3%
Shtime	2	0.2%	12	0.3%	14	0.3%
Malisheva	2	0.2%	9	0.2%	11	0.2%
Hani i Elezit	0	0.0%	6	0.1%	6	0.1%
Skenderaj	2	0.2%	4	0.1%	6	0.1%
Deçan	1	0.1%	2	0.0%	3	0.1%
Junik	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	1,083	20.7%	4,170	79.3%	5,253	100%

Source: KBRA

The number of minority-owned businesses in Kosovo has increased progressively throughout the years. A significant increase of 117 businesses can be noticed in 2013 from 2012, compared to the difference of 12 more businesses in 2012 from 2011. Another significant increase in the number of minority-owned businesses occurred in 2019, when 508 more businesses registered than in 2018.

Figure 5. Number of new active minority-owned businesses registered from 2000 to March 2023



Source: KBRA

3. Lifespan of women-owned businesses

There are 33,003 deregistered businesses in Kosovo from 2000 to March 2023. Out of these businesses, 21,035 (64%) were owned by men, 4,072 (12%) were owned by women, 97 (0.3%) were co-owned by at least one woman, and for 7,799 (23.7%) the gender of the owner(s) is unknown.

Figure 6. Deregistered businesses, by gender of the owner(s)

Source: KBRA

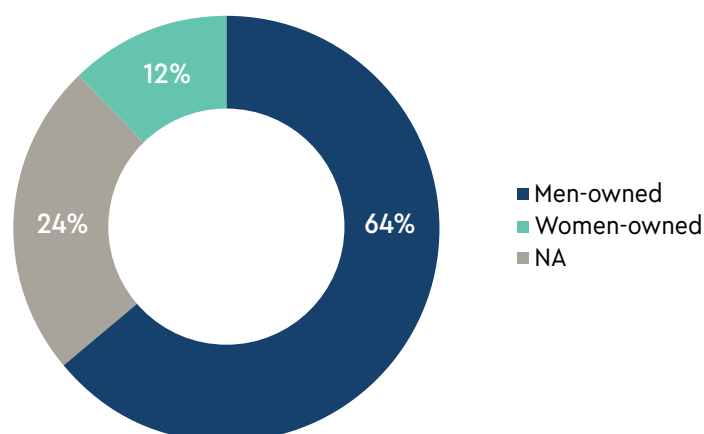
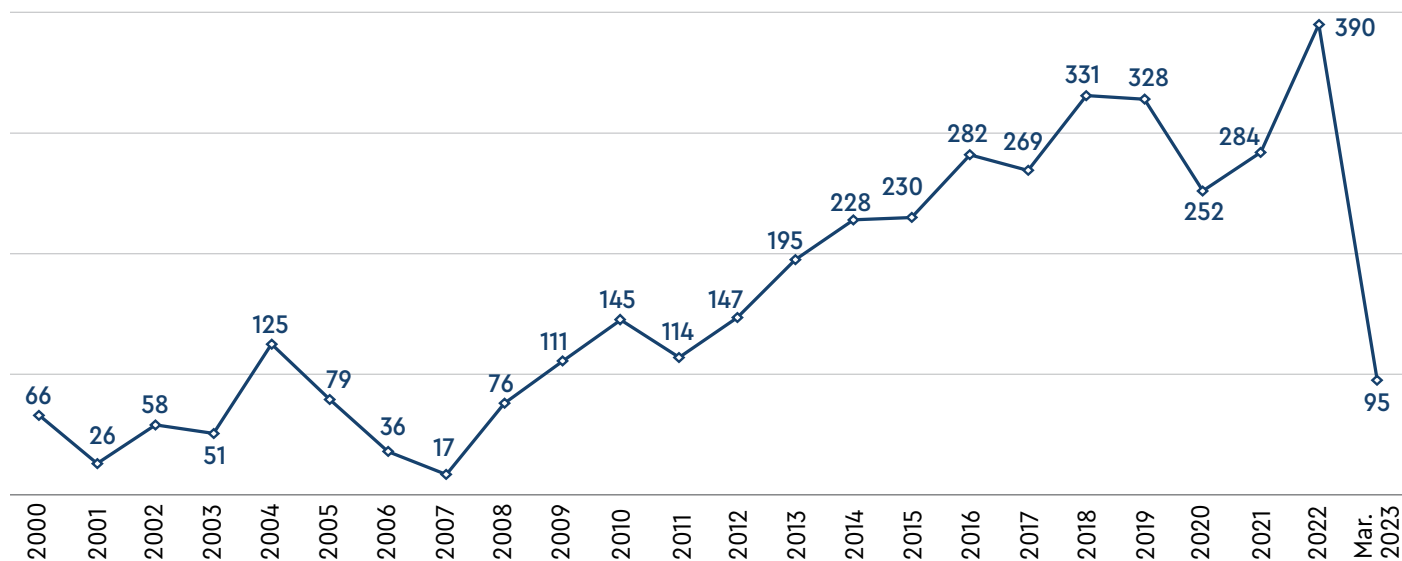


Figure 7 shows businesses by year of deregistration. According to this data, there was a large number of businesses deregistering in 2016 and 2019. The number of deregistered women-owned businesses peaked in 2022 with more than 100 deregistered businesses compared to 2021. For 2,564 entries, there is no information regarding the date of deregistration.

Figure 7. Deregistered women-owned businesses, by year of deregistration

Source: KBRA

Table 11 shows the deregistered women-owned businesses in each sector of the economy. The analysis evidences that a large share of deregistered businesses were operating in wholesale and retail trade, and other service activities. For 1,169 of the deregistered women-owned businesses, there is no information available on the sector of the economy they were operating.

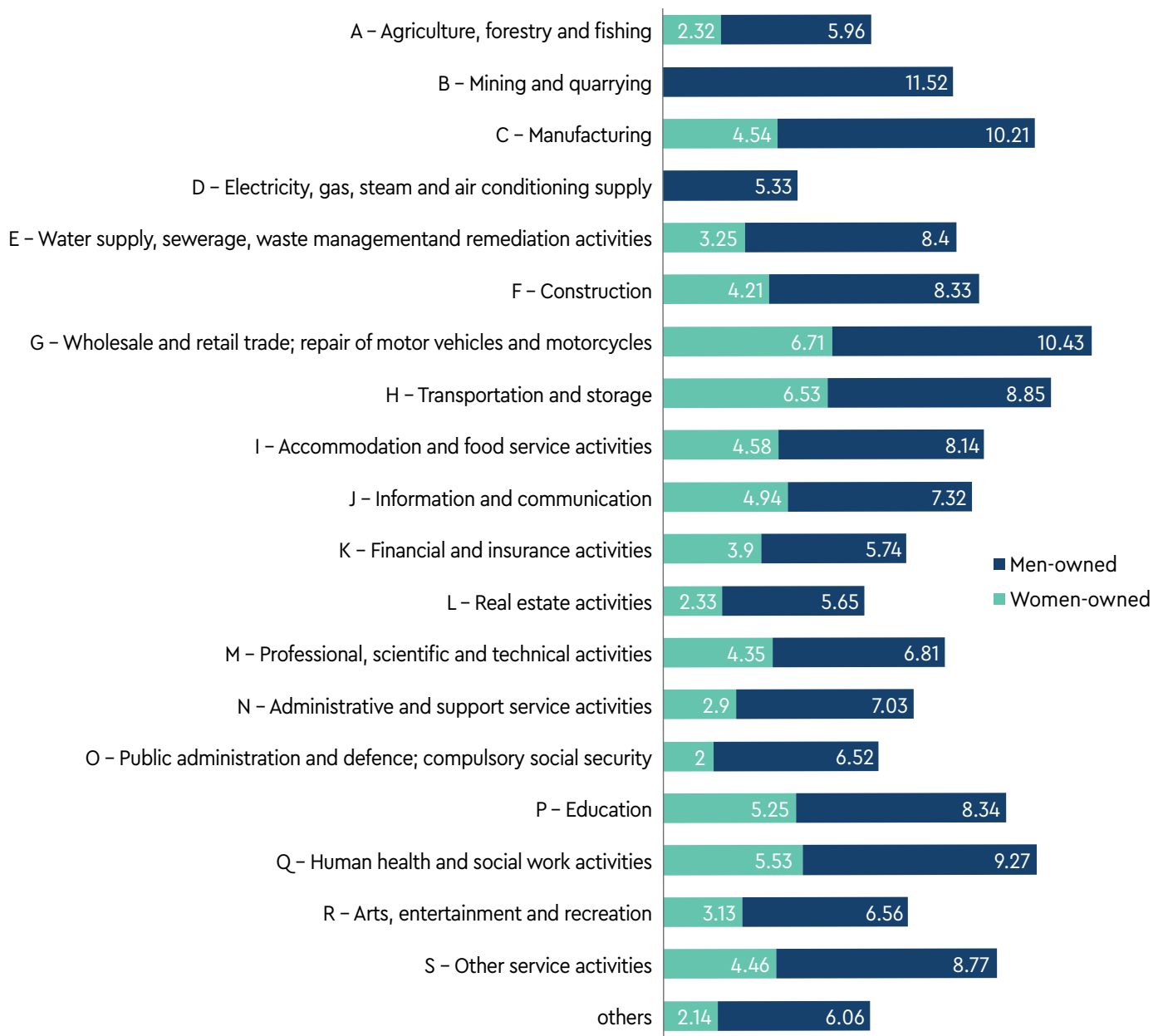
Table 11. Deregistered women-owned businesses, by sector of the economy

Source: KBRA

Sector of the economy	Deregistered women-owned businesses	
A - Agriculture, forestry and fishing	126	3.1%
B - Mining and quarrying	0	0.0%
C - Manufacturing	237	5.8%
D - Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0	0.0%
E - Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	4	0.1%
F - Construction	32	0.8%
G - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1056	25.9%
H - Transportation and storage	35	0.9%
I - Accommodation and food service activities	166	4.1%
J - Information and communication	55	1.4%
K - Financial and insurance activities	28	0.7%
L - Real estate activities	6	0.1%
M - Professional, scientific and technical activities	172	4.2%
N - Administrative and support service activities	72	1.8%
O - Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	4	0.1%
P - Education	93	2.3%
Q - Human health and social work activities	121	3.0%
R - Arts, entertainment and recreation	39	1.0%
S - Other service activities	655	16.1%
Other	1169	28.7%
Total	4,070	

Overall, the difference between the percentages of deregistered women-owned and men-owned businesses is smaller compared to the percentages of active women-owned and men-owned businesses. Although the data on the lifespan of businesses (difference between the date of registration and date of deregistration) is incomplete, an analysis of 3,801 deregistered women-owned businesses suggests that the average lifespan for women-owned businesses is 4.36 years. This is approximately half of the average lifespan of 8.6 years for men-owned businesses²⁴. The sectors with the lowest average lifespan of women-owned businesses are in public administration and defense, compulsory social security (2 years); agriculture, forestry and fishing (2.32 years); and real estate activities (2.33 years). The women-owned businesses with the highest lifespan were operating in the sectors of wholesale and retail trade (6.71 years) and transportation and storage (6.53). Men-owned businesses with the lowest lifespan were operating in the mining and quarrying sector: (11.52 years), whereas those with the highest lifespan were operating in the sector of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning (5.33 years).

Figure 8. Average lifespan of businesses in years, by sector of the economy



Source: GAP, based on KBRA data

²⁴ 11,924 men-owned businesses were analysed in order to get the average lifespan.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This report identifies the profiles of women-owned and minority-owned businesses. Women-owned businesses are mostly focused in wholesale and retail trade, service activities, and manufacturing. The sectors with the smallest portion of women-owned businesses are mining and quarrying, activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing, activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies, water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities, and transportation and storage. The municipalities with the largest gender gaps when it comes to the number of men-owned and women-owned businesses are Dragash, and Rahovec; whereas the municipality with the most equal divide is Partesh. The vast majority of women-owned businesses are micro businesses with up to nine employees. Minority-owned businesses are mostly focused in wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, manufacturing, and agriculture, forestry, and fishing. These businesses are mostly located in Prishtina, Prizren, and Gracanica.

Lastly, the analysis evidences a lifespan average of 4.36 years for women-owned businesses, compared to the 8.6 years average for men-owned businesses. The women-owned businesses with the lowest average lifespan were operating in the following sectors: public administration and defense, compulsory social security; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and real estate activities. The women-owned businesses with the highest lifespan were operating in the following sectors: wholesale and retail trade, and transportation and storage.

The report can be used by decision-making authorities, donors, civil society, and other stakeholders on the profiles of women-owned and minority-owned businesses, in order to properly design training and mentoring programs, as well as for future advocacy purposes. Therefore, GAP recommends:

- The Government of Kosovo should ensure a cohesive definition of what is considered an "active business" and credible data collecting mechanisms so the data is not mismatched, like in this case when the numbers from KBRA, TAK, and KAS are not aligned with one another. It is suggested that MIET should lead the coordination between the three institutions to try to reconcile the definitions to the extent possible.
- The Government of Kosovo together with the Agency of Gender Equality should actively monitor the institutions required to collect and maintain gender-disaggregated data; impose stronger sanctions for those failing to follow the Law on Gender Equality.
- The Government together with the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade, and Ministry of Local Government Administration should design and implement inclusive policies to promote women and minority entrepreneurship in municipalities, with more focus on those municipalities where women-owned and minority-owned businesses are underrepresented (most notably: Dragash, Rahovec, Shtime, Malisheva, and others).
- Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade, and its agencies should organize research informed discussion(s)/consultation(s) among different stakeholders including the donors, Tax Administration in Kosovo, Kosovo Business Registration Agency, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, business associations, chambers of commerce, and civil society organizations, on the appropriate design of information in regards to women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

Annexes

Annex 1. Types of Businesses

Individual business	A person who is the owner of an Individual Business, shall have unlimited personal liability for all debts and other obligations incurred or imposed by Law or a contract, on the Individual Business. The official name of the Individual Business shall be the legitimate name and surname of the owner and the words "Individual Business", or abbreviation "I.B."
General partnership	In a general partnership all partners are responsible without limitation and with solidarity for debts of the organization. The collective organization has one name which may include the name of one of the partners, by putting immediately after it the acronym "G.P."
Limited Partnership	In limited partnerships, the "limited" partners are responsible for the obligations of the company to the limit of the value of their contributions in the charter capital. Partnership has a name, in which it can be included the name of one or more partners, by putting immediately after it the acronym "L.P."
Limited Liabilities Companies (L.L.C)	Organizations established by one or more founders, who are responsible only to the level of their contribution and all assets. Limited Liability Company has one name by putting immediately after it the acronym "L.L.C.". KBRA may register a limited liability company without the need to provide proofs for payment of the capital.
Joint Stock Companies (J.S.C.)	Joint Stock Companies are those organizations whose capital is divided in shares and the shareholders are responsible only to the level of the value of their contribution. The organization can be established and have one or more shareholders. It has one name behind which is placed the acronym "J.S.C.". The amount of the charter capital for these organizations is at least 10.000 Euro.
Foreign Business Organizations	The foreign business organization is a business organization which from the moment of registration is considered as a branch in Kosovo that does not have the identity of a legal person. After registration, it enjoys all rights and obligations established based on the applicable law. After the name it shall be written "Branch in Kosovo" or the abbreviation B.K..
Socially owned enterprises	Socially owned enterprise means a legal person most of whose assets and capital are socially owned. These enterprises until privatized are monitored and registered by the Kosovo Privatization Agency according to Law No.02/L-123 on Business Organizations.
Public enterprises	Public enterprise is an enterprise that performs activities of general interest, which is established by the state. Public enterprise is monitored by the Government and is organized as a Joint Stock Company in accordance with applicable Law on Business Organizations. All property interests in a public enterprise will be represented with shares and all these shares must be registered.
Agricultural cooperatives	Agricultural cooperative is a business organization created by natural or legal persons all of which should be farmers who contribute with their own private property in the shared capital. Agricultural cooperative is established from at least five (5) farmers that are signatories of obligations. The cooperative shall not be established without capital and it shall not exist without capital. The capital is divided on shares of even value with a minimal value of 10 Euro. The director may not be a member of the cooperative. All these can be seen in Law No 2003/9 on Agricultural Cooperatives and Law No.03/L-004 on Amending and Supplementing Law on Agricultural Cooperatives Nr-2003/9.

Source: Law No. 06/L-016 on business organizations, <https://bit.ly/3BVY4kr>.



GAP Institute is a Think Tank established in October 2007 in Kosovo. GAP's main goal is to attract professionals to create an environment of professional development and research, as seen in similar institutions in Western countries. This also provides Kosovars with opportunities to research, develop and implement projects in order to advance the Kosovo society. Priority for this Institute is the mobilization of professionals to address the country's economic, political and social challenges. GAP's main goals are to fill the gaps between government and citizens, and between problems and solutions.

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