Measuring Entrepreneurship from a Gender Perspective

The Italian experience

The context

- ***Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Gender into Business and Trade Statistics*** prepared by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics with contributions from the Task Team on Business Dynamics and approved by UN Statistical Commission in Decision 55/116
- The guidance note encourages the advancement of **gender and social perspective integration into business and trade statistics**, while strengthening collaboration with experts in these domains
- Istat has been actively contributing to the work of the UNCEBTS Task Team on Business Dynamics, Business Demography and Entrepreneurship, which is developing a **working document on indicators** for integrating gender into business and trade statistics

Integrating a gender approach into business and trade statistics

Women can make a significant contribution to entrepreneurial activity (Noguera et al., 2013) and **economic development** (Kelley et al., 2017; Hechevarría et al., 2019) by creating new jobs and increasing the gross domestic product (GDP) (World Bank, 2020; Ayogu and Agu, 2015), with positive effects on **reducing poverty and social exclusion** (World Bank, 2014; Cirera and Qasim, 2014).

Increasing the number of women in leadership positions is also essential for providing **role models** and inspiring younger generations.

Nevertheless, women remain underrepresented among entrepreneurs in many countries (UN, 2019a; Elam et al., 2019; GEM, 2023).

Challenges

Exploring a new statistical domain for experts in gender statistics requires **significant effort and close collaboration with experts in business statistics**

Developing a comprehensive framework to measure the interactions between gender and business involves integrating and **linking data across multiple statistical domains.**

This includes **connecting information on individual business owners with data on their enterprises**, in order to analyze the relationship between the entrepreneur and the characteristics and performance of the business.

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The infrastructure: the integrated system of registers 1/2

Enterprise 1
Enterprise 2
Enterprise 3
……..

Job position 1 (self-employed)+indiv. key+business key
Job position 2 (employee) „ „ „
Job position 3 (employee) „ „ „
Job position 4 (family worker) „ „ „
……..

Individual 1
Individual 2
Individual 3
……..

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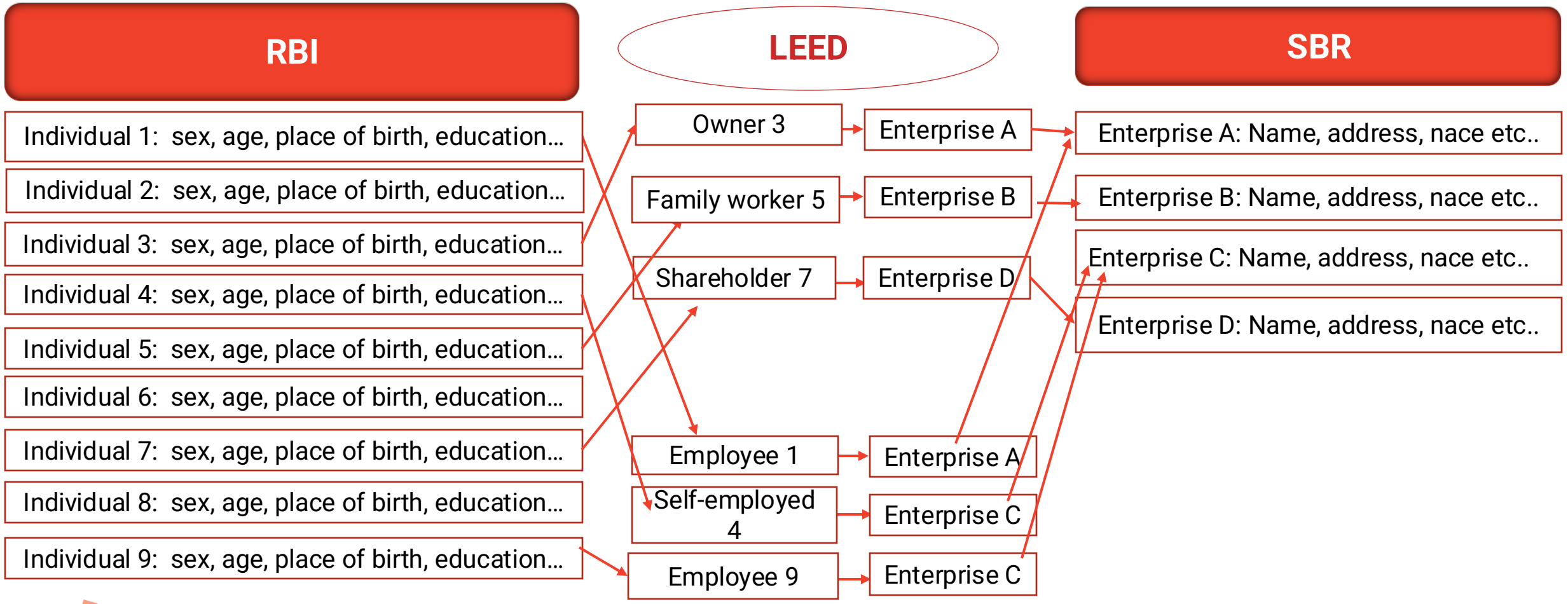
The infrastructure: some examples



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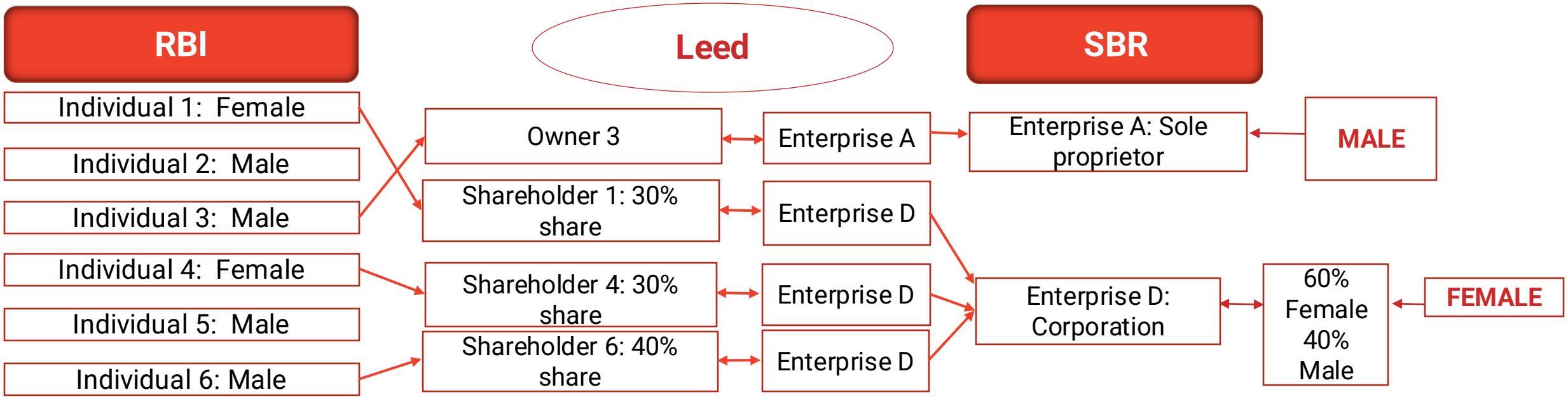
The identification of female enterprises



"Gender" becomes a defining characteristic of the enterprise. "Female" enterprises are those in wich ownership and control are predominantly held by women.

Businesses in which women represent **more than 50 percent of total ownership** — considering partnerships, shareholding, board membership, and other forms of participation—are classified as "female-owned

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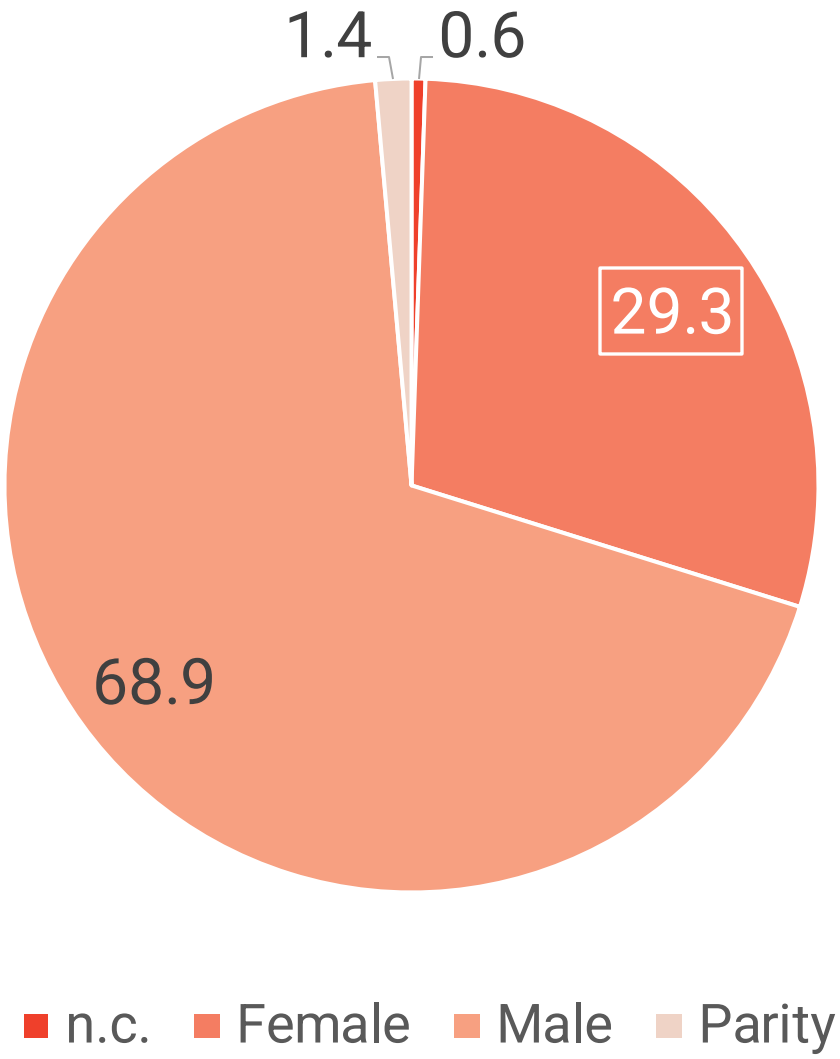
Enterprises by gender of enterprise - Year 2023

In 2023 female owned enterprises make up less than one third (29.3%). 1.7 percentage point more than 2020 (27.6%)

Nearly 7 out of 10 businesses are male-owned

Gender-equal businesses, where ownership is equally divided between men and women, represent a very small component (1.4%)



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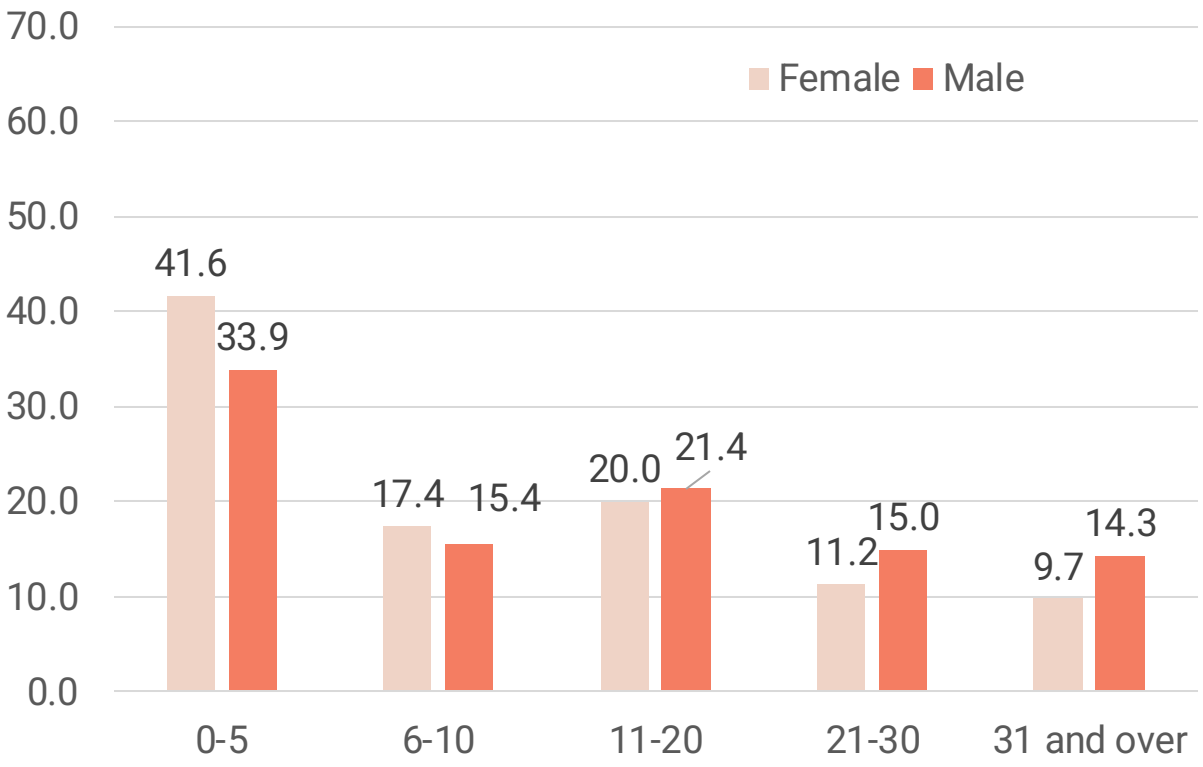
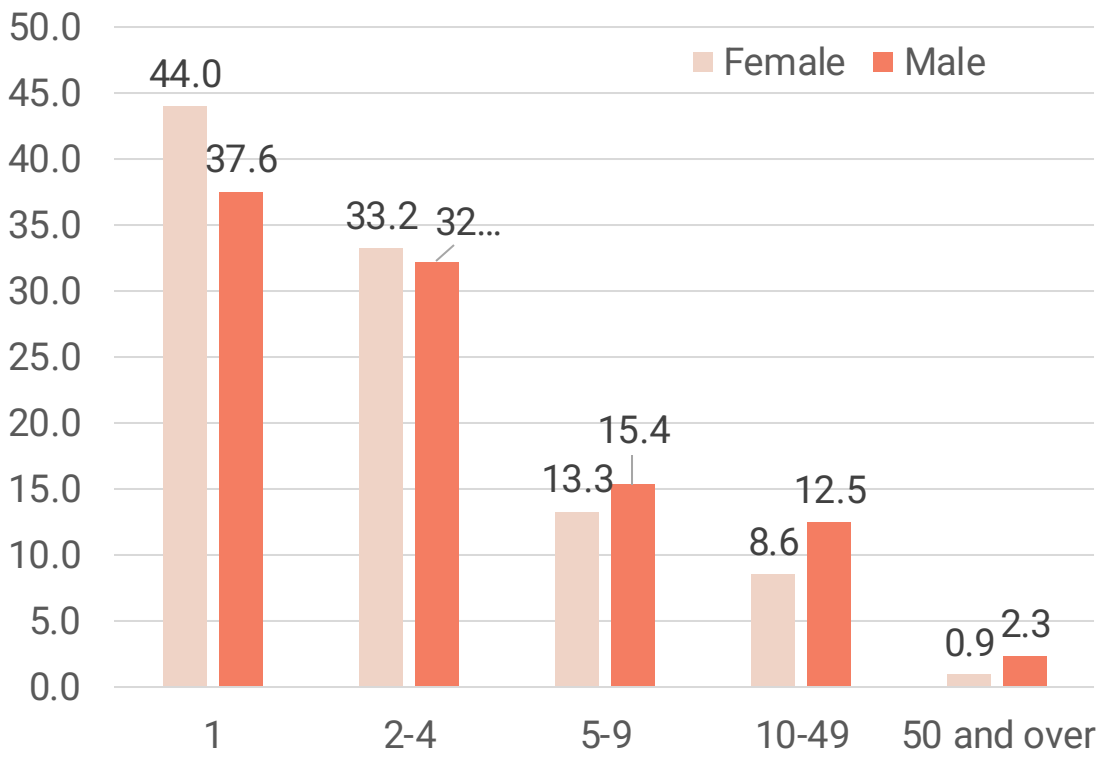
Enterprises by gender of enterprise, age and number of employees - Year 2023

Enterprise by age



Enterprises* by number of employees



*with employess

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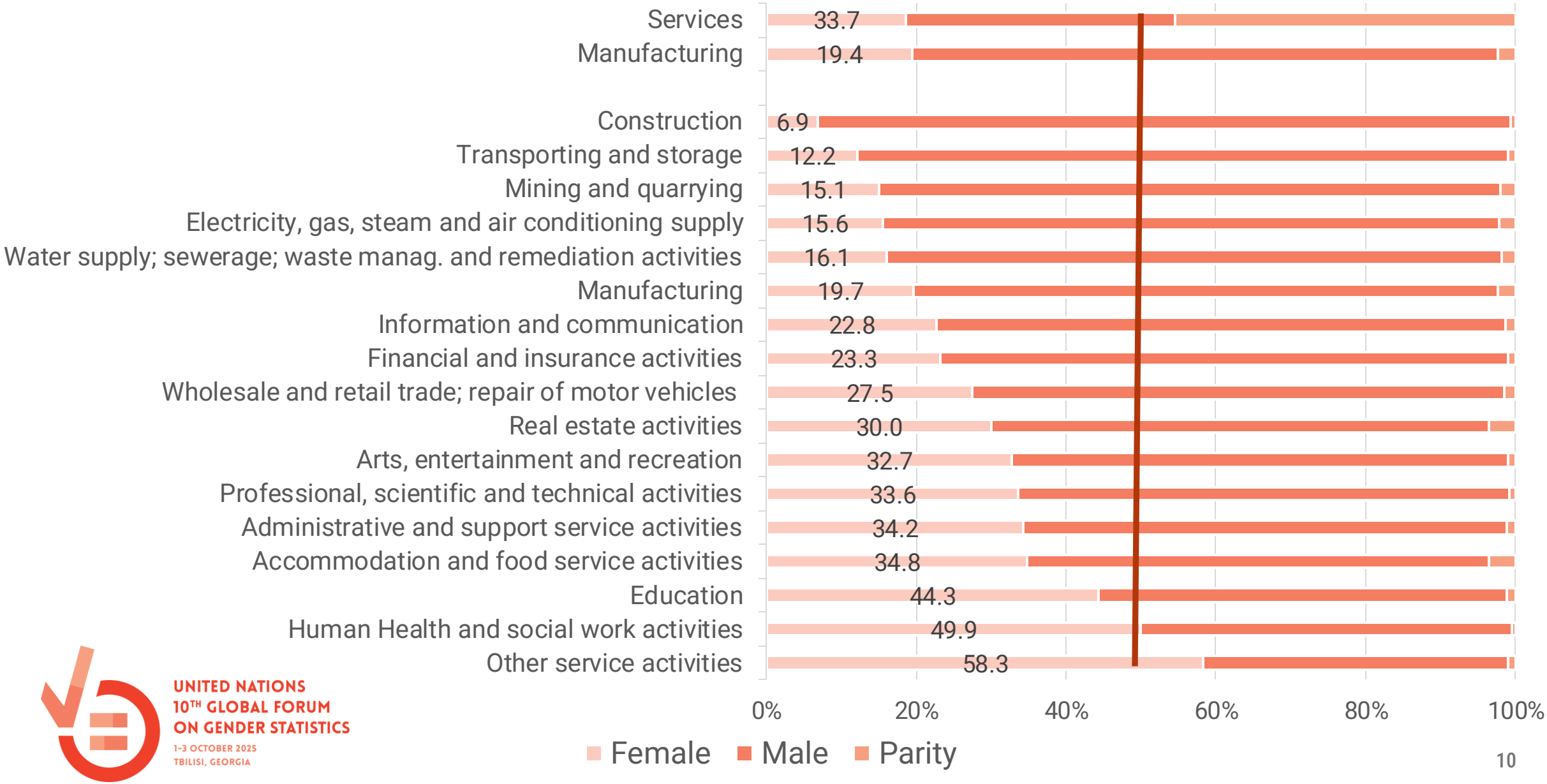
Enterprises by gender of enterprise and economic activity - Year 2023



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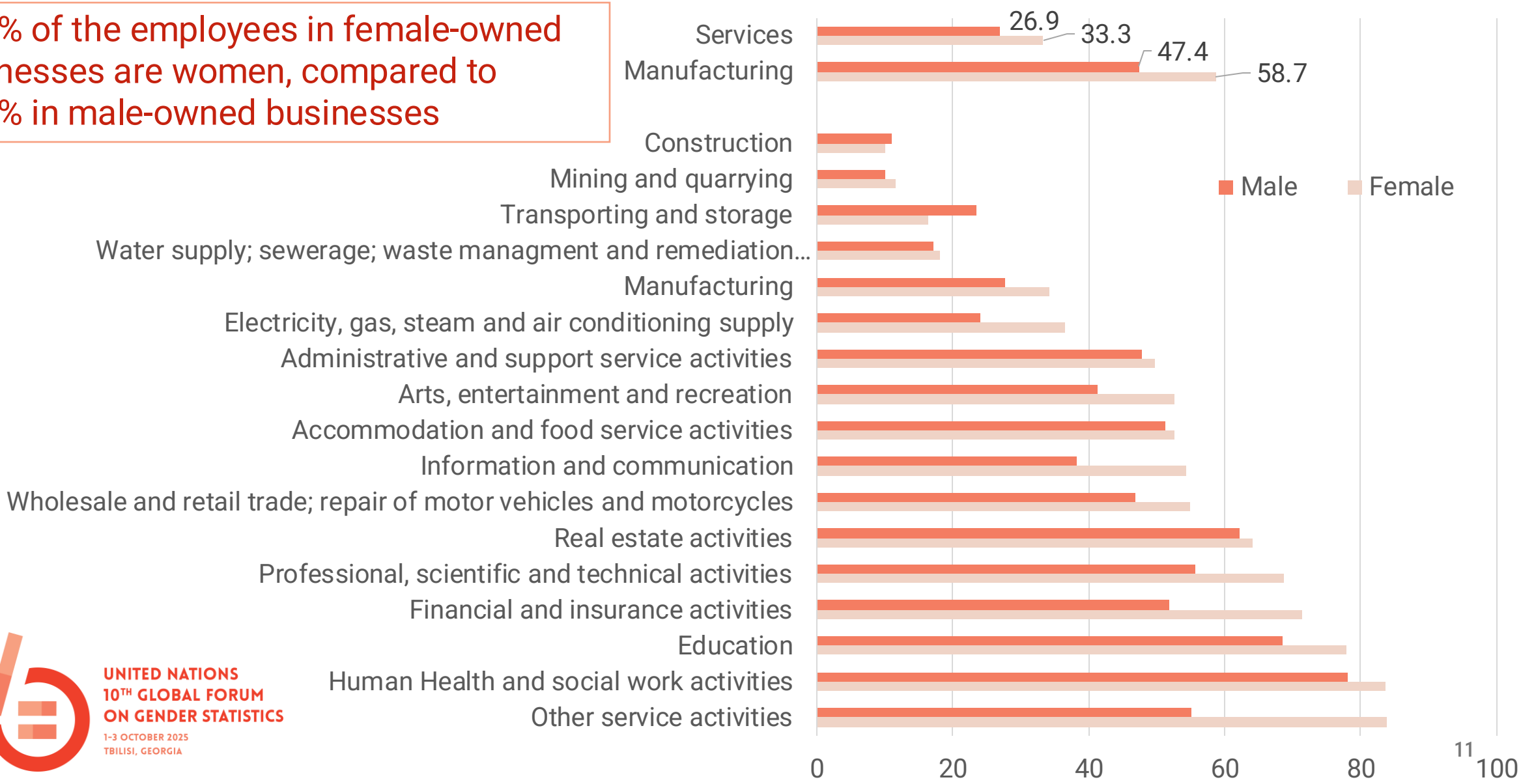
Female employment by gender of enterprise and economic activity – Year 2023

50.2% of the employees in female-owned businesses are women, compared to 38.2% in male-owned businesses



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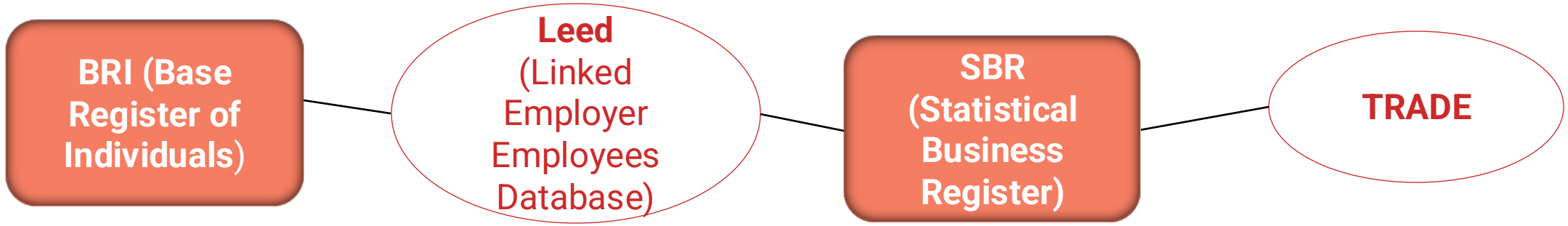
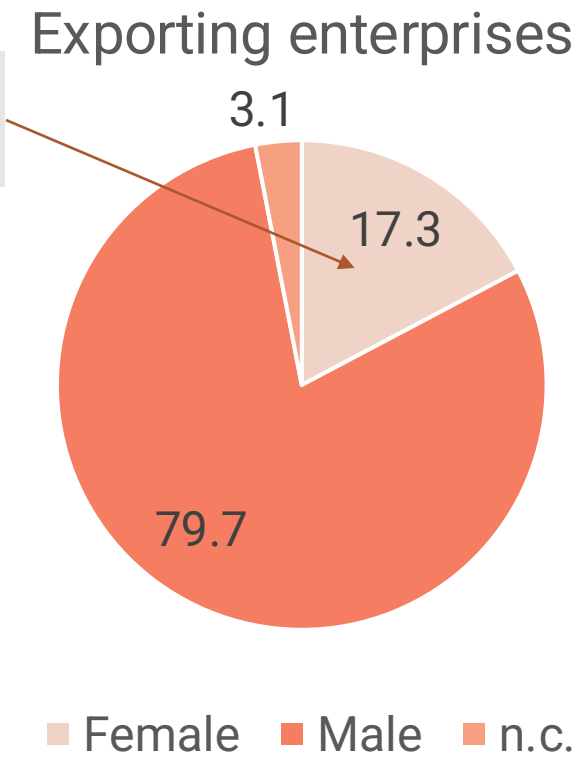
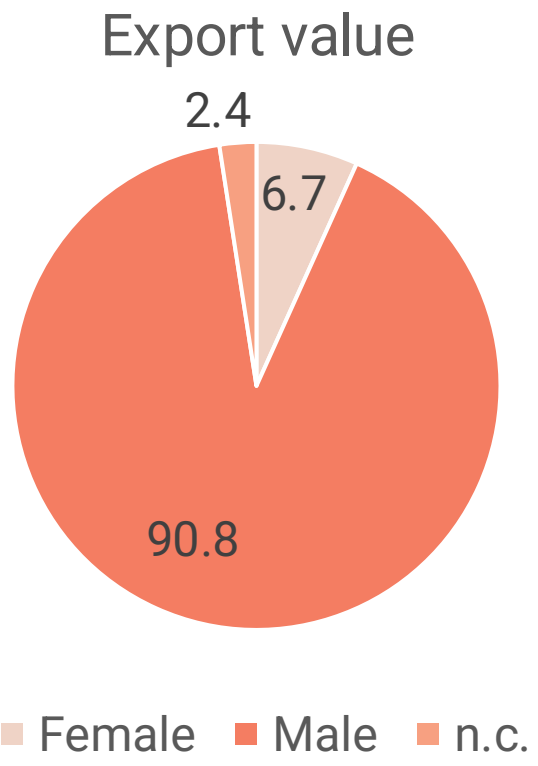
A look at the international trade - Year 2023



29.3% (Total enterprises)





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Some remarks

- Data linkage and processing are highly complex and time-consuming.
- The results confirm the importance of adopting a gender perspective to reveal and reduce inequalities.
- Investments are needed in:
  - ✓ Regular production, enrichment, and updating of business data disaggregated by gender
  - ✓ Integration of the framework with additional variables (e.g., investment in training, digitalisation, environmental sustainability, etc.)
  - ✓ Dissemination of data that generates meaningful interest within the business community
- Emphasizing the urgency of developing a shared international methodology

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Thank you!

Contact:
Maria Clelia Romano/ISTAT
Patrizia Cella/ISTAT
romano@istat.it
cella@istat.it