

PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2017-2021

Progress Report 2019



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA





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A child playing in a summer camp in Tirana / ©Bevis Fusha 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms

Contributing Partners in 2019

Foreword

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Key Development Trends in Albania—Year 2019 in Brief

Chapter 2: Agenda2030—Albania Achievements towards SDGs

Chapter 3: Delivering Results for Albania

- Outcome 1: Governance and Rule of Law
 - o Output 1.1 Human Rights
 - o Output 1.2 Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law
 - o Output 1.3 Local Governance
 - o Output 1.4 Access to Justice
 - o Output 1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender-Responsive Budgeting
 - o Output 1.6 Migration and Asylum
- Outcome 2: Social Cohesion
 - o Output 2.1 Health
 - o Output 2.2 Education
 - o Output 2.3 Social Inclusion and Protection
 - o Output 2.4 Child Protection
 - o Output 2.5 Gender-Based Violence
- Outcome 3: Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture
 - o Output 3.1 Economic Development
 - o Output 3.2 Labour
 - o Output 3.3 Agriculture and Rural Development
 - o Output 3.4 Culture
- Outcome 4: Environment and Climate Change
 - o Output 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change
 - o Output 4.2 Natural Resources

Chapter 4: The UN Delivering as One in Albania in 2019

Annexes

Annex A: Progress against PoCSD results framework

Annex B: Administrative agent financial report on Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for 2019

Annex C: Financial overview of 2019 total budget, including all sources of funding

Annex D: National implementing partners, participating UN organisations, funds and programmes, and their acronyms and websites

Annex E: UN and UN-supported organisations publications in 2019

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing	EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
ADISA	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome	FATF	Financial Action Task Force
ALL	Albanian Lek	FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
ALMP	Active Labour Market Programme	FGE	Fund for Gender Equality
AML	Anti-Money Laundering	FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
ASCAP	Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (<i>Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education</i>)	FLA	Free Legal Aid
ASLG	Agency for Support to Local Self-Governance	GB-DV	Gender-Based and Domestic Violence
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	GCF	Green Climate Fund
BOS	Business Operations Strategy	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
BUR	Biennial Update Report	GE	Gender Equality
CAT	Convention against Torture	GEF	Global Environment Fund
CCCVE	Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism	GHG	Greenhouse Gas
CCP	Container Control Programme	GI	Geographic Indications
CEC	Central Elections Commission	GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	GM	Gender Mainstreaming
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training	GoA	Government of Albania
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
CFT	Counter-Financing of Terrorism	GREAT	Gender Rural Equality and Tourism
CMW	Committee on Migrant Workers	GVA	Growth Value Added
CPU	Child Protection Unit	HACT	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	HDI	Human Development Index
CRM	Coordinated Referral Mechanism	HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education	HMS	Household Migration Survey
CSEA	Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	IAP	Ionian Adriatic Pipeline
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism	ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers	ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
DOCO	Development Operations Coordination Office	ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
EPP	Employment Promotion Programme	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
EPR	Environmental Performance Review	ILO	International Labour Organisation
EU	European Union	IMF	International Monetary Fund
EVAC	Ending Violence against Children	INSTAT	National Institute of Statistics
		IOM	International Organisation for Migration
		IPARD	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development

IPH	Institute of Public Health
IPMG	Integrated Policy Management Group
ISARD	Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development
ISDA	Innovation for Service Delivery
JEC	Joint Executive Committee
JWP	Joint Work Plan
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex
LGU	Local Government Unit
LINAC	Linear Accelerator
LNB	Leave No One Behind
LTA	Long-Term Agreement
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package
MMR	measles, mumps, and rubella
MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoESY	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MPA	Marine and Coastal Protected Area
MRDC	Medical Response to Diplomatic Corps
MTBP	Mid-Term Budget Programme
NAES	National Agency for Employment and Skills
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPA	National Agency for Protected Areas
NAPIRE	National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians
NAVETQ	National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NCSDLG	National Strategy on Decentralisation and Local Government
NDA	National Designated Authority
NDC	National Determined Contribution
NES	National Employment Service
NESS	National Employment and Skills Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NLC	National Labour Council
NRA	Non-Resident Agency
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration

NSGE	National Strategy on Gender Equality
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONAC	Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator
ORML	outpatient reimbursed medicines list
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSSIS	One-Stop-Shop Information System
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PCU	Port Control Unit
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Analysis
PHC	Primary Health Care
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PoCSD	Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development
R&E	Roma and Egyptian
REA	Regional Economic Area
REVALB	Recording Violence in Albania
RIRA	Regional Investment Reform Agenda
RMSA	Refugee and Migrant Services in Albania
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RSH	Reproductive and Sexual Health
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SD4E	Skills Development for Employment
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SIIG	Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group
SILC	Survey on Income and Living Conditions
SIPD	Social Inclusion Policy Document
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SME	Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPAK	<i>Struktura e Posaçme kundër korrupsionit dhe krimet të organizuar</i> (Special Anti-Corruption Structure)
SPO	Special Prosecution Office
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TADOC	Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organised Crime
TAP	Trans Adriatic Pipeline
TAR	Territorial-Administrative Reform
TB	Tuberculosis

TBML	Trade-Based Money-Laundering
TK	Traditional Knowledge
TLAS	Tirana Legal Aid Society
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UCO	Used Cooking Oil
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN OMT	UN Operations Management Group
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States Dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VET	Vocational Education Training
VNR	Voluntary National Report
WB	World Bank
WBF	Western Balkans Fund
WB6	Western Balkans Six (countries)
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
ZVAP	Zyra Vendore e Arsimit Parauniversitar (Local Office for Pre-university Education)

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS IN 2019

	European Union		Government of Germany
	Government of Albania		Government of France
	Government of Austria		Government of Russia
	Government of Netherlands		Government of Luxemburg
	Government of Italy		Government of Croatia
	Government of Switzerland		Government of Norway
	Government of Sweden		Government of Australia
	Government of Turkey		Government of Kazakhstan
	Government of United Kingdom		Government of South Korea
	Government of United States of America		

The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
Peace Building Fund
Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Global Environment Fund
Global Fund to End Violence Against Children
UN Global Funds
Gilead Science Inc.
Intesa Sanpaolo Bank of Albania

FOREWORD

In our capacity as the Co-Chairs of the Joint Executive Committee of the Government of Albania and the United Nations in Albania, we are pleased to present the Annual Progress Report of the third year of our Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021.

Years 2018 and 2019 were dominated by several earthquakes, strongest being the earthquake of 26 November 2019, and the extraordinary mobilisation of the domestic and international response, only to be followed in the early months of 2020 by the COVID-19 crisis, this time of global proportions. Both crises highlight the importance of the work that the UN and its partners do in capacity building and preparedness. And both crises highlight how much more there is to be done. The closing days of 2019 witnessed the Government, the UN and its partners working around the clock to assist those affected by the earthquake, and putting together a rapid Post-Disaster Needs Assessment to get on with Building Back Better as quickly as possible.

We recognise that success—in our time perhaps best measured by progress towards Agenda 2030 and the accompanying improvements in the wellbeing of Albanians—is founded on partnership. The UN's wide-ranging partnerships across the governmental institutions of Albania—from the Prime Minister's Office and na-

tional ministries to local administrative units, from independent institutions such as INSTAT or the People's Advocate to individual child protection workers or border officials—lies at the core of our work. Parliament plays a special role, creating regulatory environments, deciding priorities through key processes such as the national budget, and increasingly overseeing the work of the executive branch of government. Organisations of civil society identify gaps and needs, provide services, perform watchdog functions, offer innovative solutions, and neither the UN nor the government will achieve its objectives without their partnership.

As an inter-governmental organisation, the UN leverages the knowledge of the world, and this is amplified through engagements with international development partners. In 2019, the UN collectively delivered USD 18.6 million through its programmes, of which two-thirds was mobilized by efforts of the country offices. Support for the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund this year not only included two of our flagship joint programmes—Leave No One Behind (Switzerland) and Eliminating Violence against Women (Sweden)—but also new and renewed partners. The governments of Albania and Norway each contributed to the Fund, while discussions with the EU have been initiated on gender equality. Bilateral agreements support the work of UN agencies and their partners in areas such as labour mediation (Sweden), area-based develop-

ment programming in the north (UK), anti-trafficking (UK), rural women (Italy), legal aid and access to justice (Austria), health policy (Switzerland), and promoting social entrepreneurship, as well as cultural heritage, and local governance and democracy (EU), to name but a few. Multilateral partners, such as CEB, have supported the expansion of reception capacities for migrants and asylum seekers, and the UN's Peacebuilding Fund is helping the UN to jointly accompany RYCO in its aims. The UN Country Team in Albania was one of 36 countries to win a first round grant of the Global Joint SDG Fund on social protection.

All of the UN's work in Albania contributes to the country's achievement of Agenda 2030 and the ambition to integrate with the European Union. We see EU integration, in fact, as an accelerator towards the SDGs. In 2019, the government chaired the UNECE-hosted Regional SDG Forum in Geneva, underscoring its commitment. Interim targets for the achievement of the SDGs were prepared across government, led by the Prime Minister's Department for Development and Good Governance. These targets, along with a review of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015–2020, will feed into the preparation of a new NSDI 2021–2030. Discussion is ongoing with the Prime Minister Office on the drafting of a Vision 2030 document that lays out longer-term priorities for the country, and the institutionalisation of monitoring and

reporting alongside statistical capacity building.

Finally, 2019 was the first year of the roll-out of the UN's reform of the Development System. The UN Country Team in Albania is grateful to its partners for their support for this reform, passing in many ways unnoticed thanks to its smooth implementation. The full-time Resident Coordinator and strengthened Office will be better positioned to support government's SDG and EU strategic planning. This additional capacity will help ensure that the next UN programme cycle (2022–2026) is even better tailored to Albania's needs.

We hope you are inspired by this report!



Erion Braçe
*Deputy Prime Minister
Government of Albania*



Brian J. Williams
*Resident Coordinator
United Nations in Albania*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sustainable development is everywhere now defined by the 2030 Agenda, a universal framework that all UN member states have adopted. The Government of Albania and its partners have taken many steps to accelerate achievement of the SDGs in the country.



The present United Nations Albania Progress Report features four chapters, along with five annexes complementing the findings, that provide information on progress for the year 2019, prepared with contributions from 16 UN agencies¹.

Chapter 1 reports the key development trends, with focus on European Union (EU) integration priority areas and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting the political, social and economic conditions that could impact the implementation of development initiatives in the country.¹

Sustainable development is everywhere now defined by the 2030 Agenda, a universal framework that all UN member states have adopted. The Government of Albania (GoA) and its partners have taken many steps to accelerate achievement of the SDGs in the country. These are highlighted in **Chapter 2**. Also, links between the UN agencies' implementation efforts in the country for achievement of related SDGs is reported in the narrative on progress of each output in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3—the core of the report—presents UN Albania's contribution and results for the year from working with government, civil society and development partners for sustainable development in four areas: 1) Governance and Rule of Law, 2) Social Cohesion, 3) Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture, and 4) Environment and Climate Change. These areas represent the four Outcomes of the GoA and United Nations Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021, and support the

National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015–2020, including national EU integration goals and the 2030 Agenda. An account of the implementation progress of a recently launched joint UN–Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) initiative 'Supporting the Western Balkan's collective leadership on reconciliation: building capacity and momentum for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office', is also presented at the end of this chapter. Moreover, the chapter also presents the immediate mobilisation efforts of UN Albania to the earthquake of 26 November 2019.

Chapter 4 covers implementation details, including financial delivery and operations management, the role of the Resident Coordinator and the organisation of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Albania, and provides an overview of the work of the UN Operations Management Team and UN Communication Team in the country.

Implementation of PoCSD in 2019 aimed at a budget of USD 21 million, with 74 percent provided by government and development partners in the country, including national, regional and global. By the end of the year, the programme achieved a delivery rate of 89 percent, with the balance carried over into 2020.

A few flagship results for each of the four Outcomes are provided below. For a comprehensive review, or to look up progress in a particular area, please refer to Chapter 3.

OUTCOME 1 - GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

Human Rights

- Albania submitted the following: its 3rd cycle report to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR); the 5th and 6th Periodic Report on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child; National Report on the Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action. UNCT Albania, National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) submitted alternative and shadow reports to the UPR session, Beijing+25, Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (submission on 4 recommendations). Albania received Concluding Observations from the Committees on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Migrant Workers, and Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Albanian Parliament headed the national delegation and country's commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)+25 at the Nairobi Summit to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. (Support from UN Women, United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA; United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF; International Organisation for Migration, IOM.)
- The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2020 achieved 63 percent of its objectives by the end of 2019, according to a monitoring activity supported by UN Women. Achievements included, among other, (i) increase in the number of women members of the Parliamentary Commission on National Security; in 2019, the Commission was led by a woman and included three women members, compared to 2017 and 2018 when the Commission had only two women members; (ii) increase in the participation of women in the military force; eight percent increase in number of women officers and 10.7 percent increase in women non-commissioned officers compared to 2017. (Support from UN Women.)
- The adoption during 2019 of new laws on Social and Economic Aid and on the 2020 Budget, as well as amendments to the Law on the Use of Iodised Salt and Parliament's Resolution on Children, represent critical steps to improving the status of children in the country. (Support from UNICEF.)
- Albania is one step closer to meeting its commitment to eradicating statelessness and achieving the pledges made during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness during the Global Refugee Forum, which effectively set the asylum policy agenda for the coming years. A total of 472 persons at risk of statelessness benefited from the provision of Free Legal Aid (FLA) services, with 358 cases resolved, and another 114 to be followed up in 2020. The six by-laws required for implementation of the revised Law on Civil Status were drafted and adopted, and entered into force in May 2019. Comments were drafted on the revised Law on Citizenship and presented in a hearing of the National Security Committee of the Albanian Parliament. (Support from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR; Tirana Legal Aid Society.)

1. Resident Agencies: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO; Non-resident Agencies: IAEA, ILO, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO and UNODC.

Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law

- The citizen-centric service delivery reform in Albania encompassed support for innovation and expansion of customer-care service delivery throughout the country with: a Mobile Delivery Office piloted in Baldushk, Shengjergj and Zall-Herr; Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania (ADISA) municipal One-Stop-Shops in Belsh, Divjaka, Kukes, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq and Patos; ADISA Innovation Lab. new life event service information packages launched, including on needs of Roma and Egyptians (R&E), Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and foreigners in Albania, among others; 2019 Trust in Government opinion poll fieldwork was completed with upgraded methodology to secure nationally representative data. (Support from United Nations Development Programme, UNDP.)
- Government is actively involved in the programme between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organisation Container Control Programme (CCP) at the Port of Durres and the CCP–Air Cargo Programme at Tirana International Airport. (Launched in early 2019, this unit is the only operational CCP–Air unit in South Eastern Europe.) By the end of 2019, the two units had seized more than 5.5 kg of pure heroin, 15 kg of hashish, 137 kg of cocaine, 1.2 million pieces of smuggled cigarettes and EUR 26,500 of undeclared currency. A mechanism was established to collect data from national institutions and produce regular evidence-based analytical reports on organised crime in the Western Balkans, including Albania. (Support from UNODC.)
- Albania's Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) action plans were reviewed in a consultative process led by the Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism to include

baselines, indicators, and costing (especially action plans of the ministries of Interior, of Finance and Economy, of Education, Sports and Youth, of Health and Social Protection, and of Justice, as well as the CVE Centre). The Albanian Inter-institutional Plan for the process of reintegration of returnees from conflict zones is being developed along with a protocol that specifies roles and responsibilities of each actor for the first 72 hours and then beyond. (Support from IOM.)

- Albanian Media Council (established in 2016) adjudicated its first complaints received from citizens about alleged violations of the journalistic code of ethics by media outlets. The council monitored 40 online media on their ethical breaches of Code of Ethics, and organised media ethics training in selected media outlets. (Support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO.)

Local Governance

- Strengthened Administrative Capacities: 37 Standard Operating Procedures developed and adopted for nine pilot municipalities; municipal good practices were identified and catalogued in a booklet; a Practical Manual on Fiscal Administration Procedures in Local Government was made available to all municipalities; Revenue Management Action Plans were developed for 29 municipalities; all 61 municipalities were equipped with webpages and are publishing their decisions online; Standard Municipal Code of Conduct for local governments was endorsed as a standard by the National Coordinator against Corruption; six municipalities piloted Integrity Risk Assessment Methodologies, which were approved by the respective councils.

- Improved Local Services: The One-Stop-Shop Information System (OSSIS) was deployed in an additional 33 municipalities, bringing the total number with a functional system to 36 across the country, and more than 1,700 municipal staff trained to operate OSSIS. Meanwhile, at least 70 administrative municipal services were re-engineered, optimised, catalogued and preconfigured as standard services, and six offices were collocated and provide local and central government services together with ADISA in the municipalities of Belsh, Divjake, Kukes, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe and Maliq. (Support from UNDP.)
- The Youth Voice platform, the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) media platform and Y-Peer network were expanded in 15 municipalities and MoUs signed with these municipalities on establishing partnership networks on SRH and Rights (SRHR), Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and on developing local plans and budgets that include young people's issues. Local partnerships for HIV–AIDS continue to be strengthened in six counties: Berat, Elbasan, Kukes, Lezhe, Shkoder and Vlore. (Support from UNFPA.)

Access to Justice

- The normative justice for children, and vulnerable women and men framework was improved through (i) approval of five Decisions of the Council of Ministers (DCMs), one Prime Minister Order and two Ministerial Ordinances based on the Criminal Justice for Children Code, which guarantees procedural rights of children; (ii) development of a roadmap for cross-disciplinary case management for justice for children processes at the local level and a package of regulatory documents for the coordination and monitoring mechanism at

the central level; (iii) three DCMs and five ministerial orders that create an effective implementation of the FLA Law as an enabling environment for vulnerable women and men to access the justice system in an unhindered and equal manner. (Support from UNICEF, UNDP.)

- The High Judicial Council decentralised the court's review of criminal justice for children cases, requiring every judicial district court assign at least three judges to specialise in justice for children. This important change in 2019 contributes to reducing the length of juvenile pre-trial detention and increasing all children's access to justice. (Support from UNICEF.)
- Access to the following services was enabled: expansion of FLA centres to the District Courts of Peshkopi and Shkoder, reaching 851 vulnerable people; three FLA centres in Durres, Fier and Lezhe began the process of revitalisation and are expected to be fully operational in 2020 onwards; work is ongoing to establish an Integrated Data System on Justice for Children and make operational the Centre for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Criminality, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice. (Support from UNDP, UNICEF.)

Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Responsive Budgeting

- The Mid-Term Budget Programme 2020–2022 is already responsive to men and women's needs, with 7.2 percent of budgetary funds pledged to address gender inequality issues in several sectors. For 2020, 38 (50%) budgetary programmes have included gender budgeting in their mid-term plans, and ten (out of 11) line ministries and two institutions (People's Advocate, Commissioner for

Protection Against Discrimination) have included the basic elements of gender equality in their budgetary programmes. (Support from UN Women.)

- Independent, oversight institutions and MPs played an increased role in demanding accountability of public institutions on budget allocations and application of Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) within them. The Ombudsperson is drafting a report on the costing and budgeting of actions against domestic violence. The High Court of Audit conducted a performance-based audit of GRB within the Gender Equality Strategy for 2018, while the gender equality sub-committee proposed to the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) concrete amendments to the Organic Budget Law (2016) to enhance gender key performance indicators in the budget preparation format. (Support from UN Women.)
- The National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) produced the 2019 Women and Men Publication independently, building on previous years of technical support from UN Women, and setting the stage for sustainable annual reporting. INSTAT also developed and launched an online platform providing access to the publication data, and compiled additional disaggregation for SDGs indicators, resulting in an increased number of SDG gender-related indicators for Albania to feed into the national 2019 SDG Indicators Report to be prepared by INSTAT in 2020.

Migration and Asylum

- Albania witnessed a significant increase in inward migration and asylum seeking during 2019, with 10,557 persons (85% increase) entering the country. The UN supported strengthened capacity

to deal with the inflow, including a fully equipped Centre for Registration and Temporary Accommodation of Migrants (60 beds) at the Border and Migration Police Station in Kapshtice, Korca, and increased reception capacity in Erseke (30 beds) and Gjirokaster (20 beds). In addition, the new National Strategy on Migration Governance (2019–2022) began implementation. Parliament passed a new Law on Asylum to ensure compliance with international standards, and amended the Law on Social Assistance (adopted in July 2019) to include asylum seekers in its scope. Work on Advance Passenger Information systems advanced with completion of an assessment of the current legal framework and IT infrastructure. (Support from IOM, UNHCR.)

- A total of 449 border or community monitoring visits were conducted and pre-screening procedures, including implementation of safeguards, were monitored. A total of 11,245 persons were provided with food and 2,774 with non-food items at border areas, 524 persons received medical services in the national health system, 7,352 persons were assisted with interpretation services during pre-screening, and 7,003 individuals were transferred to the National Reception Centre of Asylum-Seekers in Babrru. (Support from UNHCR, Caritas.)
- INSTAT conducted a Household Migration Survey that provides additional insight into migratory movements in and out of Albania. Diaspora mapping was completed for Belgium, France and Italy, charting the interest of Albanian diaspora in engaging in various professional profiles needed for the Albanian market, as well as for potential investors, and a fellowship mechanism was established and activated to promote the transfer of knowledge and skills of the diaspora for the benefit of their home country. (Support from IOM.)

OUTCOME 2 - SOCIAL COHESION

Health

- Increased focus of government on people-centred primary health care resulted in the development for the first time in Albania of a Primary Health Care (PHC) Strategy 2020–2025 (draft), revision of PHC Standards and Methodology for the List of Reimbursed Medicines, and review of capacities of the National Regulatory Authority. (Support from World Health Organisation, WHO.)
- Strengthening health sector emergency preparedness and response was a priority during 2019. Achievements include the development of a Roadmap for the National Action Plan of Health Security; an Albanian Strategic Risk Assessment, including a public health risk profile, register of risks, and a workplan for emergency preparedness actions; an MoHSP National Emergency Operation Plan and an Emergency Operation Plan for the Infectious Disease Hospital at Mother Teresa University Hospital Centre; assessment by the Institute of Public Health laboratories with regard to high threat pathogens; and a national response to address SRH issues in emergency situations (Minimum Initial Service Package implementation). (Support from WHO, UNFPA.)
- Technical assistance was provided to improve policy concerning a number of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including advanced response frameworks on HIV–TB, immunisation, antimicrobial resistance, and cancer control through approval of laws, development of action plans, protocols, guidelines, assessments and studies, as well as procurement of vaccines and medical equipment. (Support from WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA.)

Education

- UNESCO's comparative analysis 'Intersection of Gender Equality and Education in South-East Europe—A Regional Situation Analysis of the Nexus between SDG 4 and SDG 5' confirms the continuing improvement of many education indicators in Albania, but highlights disparities between the levels of education (from early childhood to upper secondary).
- The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY) produced a diagnosis of the education system, based on an OECD–UNICEF review of the system and mid-term review of the current Strategy for Pre-University Education 2014–2020, whose recommendations will feed into the development of a new sector strategy and trigger debates on the quality and inclusiveness of the education system itself. The pre-school assessment framework and curricula for the pre-primary year were approved in 2019 by MoESY and have a national reach. A national budgeted policy financially supporting children at risk of dropping out of school, and those that have dropped out, was approved by DCM no. 666. A new guideline for assistant teachers, approved by MoESY decision no. 26, date 25.11.2019, details selection criteria, academic requirements, duties and responsibilities for a collaborative and inclusive assistant teacher. (Support from UNICEF.)
- In response to the November earthquake, a methodology on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in school was developed and approved, while twenty schools in the country increased their DRR capacities through teachers and school personal

custom trainings, and a DRR commission was set up in schools, with school plans for emergency preparedness developed. (Support from UNICEF.)

- Comprehensive Sexuality Education was introduced for the first time in the counties of Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokaster, Korce, Tirane and Vlore, reaching 35 per cent of students and 50 percent of teachers through information, training and monitoring. The Y-Peer network was expanded in four municipalities—Cerrik, Korce, Pogradec and Ure Vajgurore—50 new young people trained as peer educators, and more than 20,000 people reached with information on SRHR through social media. (Support from UNFPA.)

Social Inclusion and Protection

- At the national level, ministries are being supported in further developing the legal and regulatory framework for social inclusion, introducing mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of national policies and strategies, and establishing funding mechanisms at the central level to invest in social inclusion (e.g. the Social Fund, Social Enterprise Fund, measures to support and prevent out-of-school children, and social housing). INSTAT has been supported in establishing standardised data collection systems for monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion. This resulted in INSTAT publishing for the first time, in December 2019, the main results of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) in line with EU and Eurostat standards. (Support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women.)
- At the local level, municipalities are being capacitated to fulfil their obligations with regard to the provision and management of social care policy

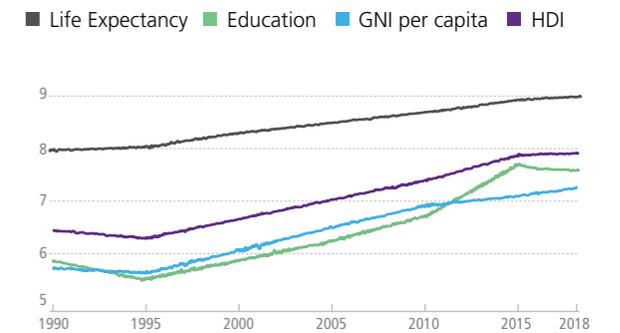
and services. This has included support for all municipalities in Albania with methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, and tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation. In addition, support has been provided to municipalities to pilot the testing of various mechanisms at the local and regional levels to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating a wider roll-out. Of the 61 municipalities in Albania, 41 now either have an approved local social care plan or are in the process of drafting, finalising or approving a plan. In addition, the capacities of social care service providers are being enhanced via a number of practical training actions for professional staff, while support is being provided to review or update university curricula on social work (pre-service and in-service skills and qualifications). (Support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women.)

- Vulnerable groups and persons are being empowered through a range of measures linked to advocacy and awareness raising. This includes capacity building of CSOs, local networks and consultative structures to promote participation in social policy planning and monitoring, as well as to facilitate access to the social services. A series of community-based social service models and tools have been developed via the programme and are now operational at the local and regional levels (e.g. services for PWD, R&E, inclusive education, child health and protection, GRB, and SRH). Meanwhile, support has been provided for rehabilitation of social care facilities and for innovative local projects. In addition, some 7,000 persons from vulnerable groups have engaged in fora and debates with local authorities on issues of concern, and around 2,750 vulnerable persons have received quality social care services as a direct result. (Support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women.)

Child Protection

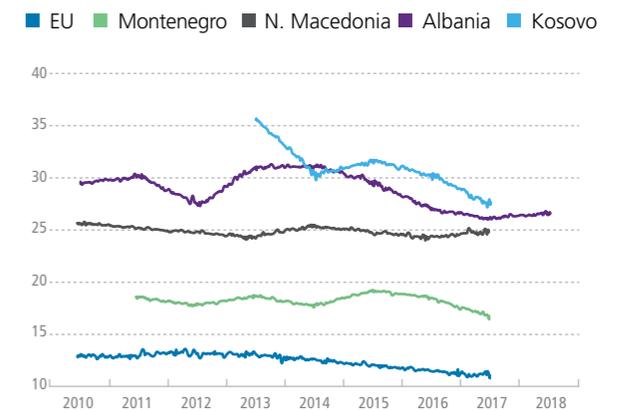
- Increased government focus on implementation of the completed legal framework for child protection has led to finalisation and adoption of a full range of by-laws for the Law on Child Rights and Protection. To support implementation, the capacities of local child protection structures have been enhanced to effectively implement the revised legal framework, including provision of assistance to (potential) Victims of Trafficking. The National Committee for Protection of Children's Rights has approved a two-year action plan on Combating the Economic Exploitation of Children. The National Child Helpline ALO116 received state financial support for the first time in 2019, marking a significant shift in terms of recognition of its central role in the child protection system and its sustainability, resulting in 893 children receiving direct help and counselling, with 100 percent of cases requiring action referred to the necessary services. (Support from UNICEF; IOM; International Labour Organisation, ILO.)
- Agreement was reached with the Chief Prosecutor of Tirana and the Ministry of Interior to establish a dedicated task force to look into the bottlenecks obstructing investigation of online crime against children. The Peer-to-peer Programme on Online Safety, designed and implemented by more than 312 peer educators, has been used by more than 12,286 school children in seven counties of Albania. Tirana Municipality promoted the initiative Friendly Wi-Fi Albania, which was operational in five Friendly Wi-Fi public spaces in the city from June to December 2019. Just one such Wi-Fi spot blocked a monthly average of 32,000 Internet requests to access blacklisted or adult sites, 150 blacklisted or adult websites and 3,000 items of child sexual abuse and pornography content. Nearly 4,500 children and ad-

Trends in Albania's HDI component indices



Source: Human Development Reports 1990-2019

Young people (age 15 – 24) not in employment, education or training (neet), (in some countries of the region)



Source: Albania in figures 2019, INSTAT

olescents received psycho-social counselling online through the web-based platform nukjevetem.al, extended in 2019 with a new service of counselling through chat sessions on mental health and child protection-related issues. (Support from UNICEF.)

- MoHSP continues to spearhead the childcare reform to ensure the transition from institutional to family and community-based care. A total of 240 children residing in nine public residential institutions were comprehensively assessed and their individual development and de-institutionalisation plans developed for implementation in 2020. (Support from UNICEF.)

Gender-Based Violence

- The legal framework on Violence against Women (VAW)–Domestic Violence (DV), and alignment with international human rights and practices, has improved. Several by-laws to the Law on Measures against violence in family relations entered into force in February, and several others related to the FLA Law were adopted by the Council of Ministers and Ministry of Justice in March. Minimum standards of social care services for Gender-Based Violence (GBV)–DV Victims and Survivors in public and non-public (short-term) residential emergency centres were approved, and five SOPs reviewed, including one on GBV in an emergency, with alignment to the legal changes to the DV Law. (Support from UNDP, UNFPA.)

- VAW–DV implementation capacities of local actors, law enforcement agencies and citizens was elevated through provision of certified trainings by the Albanian School of Public Administration, School of Magistrates, UNDP and CSOs. The trainings benefitted 21 trainers, 329 police officers, 43 DV local coordinators, 34 judges, prosecutors and judiciary chancelleries, 200 service providers, and around 1,800 women and girls, men and boys. They learned about resources and mechanisms available for referring cases of violence at the municipal level and being aware of all forms of violence and the stereotypes that enable them. (Support from UNDP, UN Women.)

- Institutional response to VAW was improved. The multi-sectoral Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) were scaled up and consolidated, with eight new CRMs established, making 49 in total across the country (80%), with four existing ones consolidated. A total of 637 GB–DV cases were recorded in the system Recording Violence in Albania in 2019 compared to 545 in 2015, while 2,834 protection orders were issued by the state police compared to 2,174 in 2015. The Liliun centre offered integrated support services to 39 survivors of sexual violence, the database recording sexual violence cases was upgraded, and the professional capacities of the psycho-social (23 persons) and the multi-disciplinary staff of Mother Theresa University Hospital Centre were increased. (Support from UNDP.)

OUTCOME 3 - ECONOMIC GROWTH, LABOUR AND AGRICULTURE

Economic Development

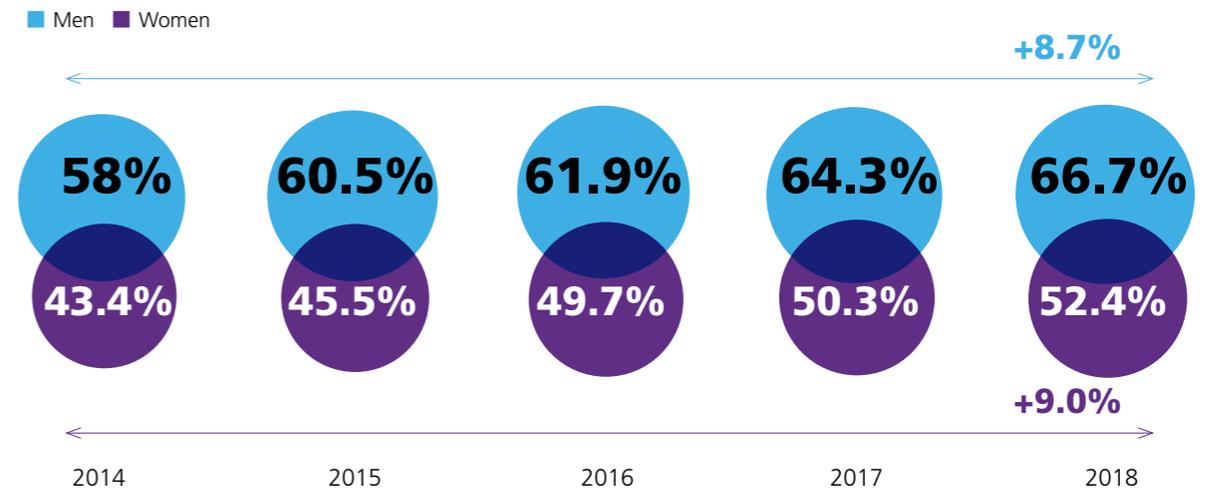
- Albanian Competition Authority participation at the annual meeting of the Inter-governmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy (Geneva, 10–12 July 2019) resulted in recognition among experts of (i) the importance of the provision of training courses in competition law and policy at the country level; and (ii) the need to strengthen national regulations related to competition. For Albania, these are crucial elements to facilitating the process of access to the EU. (Support from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD.)
- UNECE provided technical assistance in evidence-based policy making in sustainable housing and urban development. Working towards SDG 11, MoFE’s national workshop ‘Evidence-based policies to achieve SDGs: sustainable housing and urban development in Al-

bania’ (Tirana, 2–3 May 2019) helped spur the development of national programmes for social and low-cost housing in Albania. This will include an online system for the collection of applications from vulnerable groups for housing, to be finalised by the end of September 2020. (Support from United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, UNECE.)

Labour

- Reform in the employment and skills development sector continued to advance in 2019. The Action Plan of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019–2022 was revised, adopted by DCM no. 659, 10.10.2019; a new organisational structure and modern functions were proposed to transform the National Employment Services into the National Agency for Employment

EMPLOYMENT RATE (15-64 YEARS IN %)



Source: Women and Men in Albania, 2019 – INSTAT

and Skills (NAES), adopted by DCM no. 554, 31.07.2019; Active Labour Market Programmes were reconceptualised based on an approach that focuses on the profiling and needs of jobseekers and endorsed by MoFE and NAES; a comprehensive Vocational Education Training (VET) review was carried out and a first draft report prepared; self-assessment of 44 public VET providers was carried out for the first time and a full report developed and endorsed by the National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification (NAVETQ); Employment Social Fund potential for PWD was tapped through the design of a set of programmes, including on-the-job training, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship and start-ups, support for employment programmes, and workplace adjustment, among others. (Support from UNDP.)

- Capacities of the secretariat of the National Labour Council were strengthened for the operation of the case management system of the Labour Dispute Resolution and core staff of MoFE and NAVETQ on how to establish and operate sector skills committees, while a skills anticipation research (wine production value chain) with the Agriculture Skills Sector Committee and Business Albania (Employers' Organisation) was conducted to establish a methodology of operation for these committees. (Support from ILO; Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, FAO.)

Agriculture and Rural Development

- Further development of the legal and regulatory framework was undertaken. The Action Plan 2021–2027 on e-Agriculture Strategy is now in place, and a concept note and ToR for the new Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural

Development (ISARD) 2021–2027 was endorsed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD). A total of 102 women (5% of all beneficiaries) gained access to national subsidy schemes of MoARD. (Support from FAO, UN Women.)

- Support to smallholders was continued in the diversification of economic activities in Belsh, Korce, Malesi e Madhe and Permet. Main product chains were selected, Geographic Indications (GI), organic and traditional products promoted, and networking of producers, targeted consumers, local restaurants and tourist shops strengthened to encourage marketing of these products. (Support from FAO.)
- A pilot national school food and nutrition project for Albania started in Baldushk, in collaboration with the private sector and public institutions, aiming to promote healthy dietary practices in schools and provide support to small holders and local producers. (Support from FAO.)
- MoARD capacities have been strengthened in agriculture statistics, data collection, reporting, and economic and policy analysis with a 2019 Statistical Annual Report produced, while post-disaster damages and losses in agriculture following the November earthquake were assessed and fed into the Post-Disaster Needs Analysis (PDNA) report produced by the government. (Support from FAO.)

Culture

- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed extension of the World Heritage List of the part of Lake Ohrid located in Albania. (Support from UNESCO.)

OUTCOME 4 - ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural Resources

- Alignment of Albanian policies with EU requirements on nature protection and biodiversity was strengthened, with focus on financing mechanisms for protected areas to strengthen marine and coastal protection. A gap analysis of maritime sector legislation in comparison with the EU *acquis* and the Barcelona Convention was developed and 22 pieces of legislation prepared. A risk assessment of pollution from marine oil spills and hazardous pollution in ports and sea waters was developed and two exercises on response measures and management of oil clean-up operation organised. In tourist zones, a total of 4,200 kg of used cooking oil was collected, and shipped to specialised recycling facilities. A national planning framework for the institutional development of the National Agency of Protected Areas and the medium-term financial plan for the Protected Area System were developed and endorsed. A mobile application was prepared for the national park of Karaburun–Sazani <http://www.karaburunsazanmpa.com> with respective interfaces for tourism, culture and nature conservation. An Information Centre in each of the four main national parks in Albania were operational throughout the year, and youth involvement was promoted through seasonal and other work. The number of tourists visiting the protected areas in 2019 increased by 30 percent, to 916,660 individuals, compared to 2018. (Support from UNDP.)
- Several achievements were realised from the implementation of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s new project 'Promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Albania through

Integrated Restoration of Ecosystems', including MoTE approval of a comprehensive assessment and legislative gap analysis; identification of a sub-legal act needed (starting in 2020) in support of the new draft law on forestry, and proposed legal and economic instruments for stimulating investments in land productivity. At the same time, assessment is ongoing of current capacities and training needs of farmers to adopt SLM practices, with 50 farming households selected to adopt SLM practices in Kolonja Municipality. (Support from UNEP).

- The Management Plan for the World Heritage property Natural Heritage and Cultural heritage of Ohrid region was prepared and adopted. Preparations are also finalised for a joint World Heritage Centre, International Council on Monuments and Sites, and International Union for Conservation of Nature reactive monitoring mission to the property in January 2020. The joint mission will address the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee regarding the threats facing the cultural and natural attributes of the property, with its possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. (Support from UNESCO.)

DRR and Climate Change

- In the frame of the 2019 Climate Action Summit, UNDP provided government with a position paper and relevant technical advice, while continuing supporting the preparation of the first Biennial Update Report under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and a time se-

- ries for greenhouse gas emissions for the years 2010–2016 for several sectors. UNDP also prepared a Trans-boundary Drini River Strategic Action Programme, marking the development of the first strategic document for the water resources in the region. UNEP supported the National Designated Authority (MoTE) for the Green Climate Fund to begin drafting the first Albanian country programme and issue a call for proposals to strengthen the pipeline of projects. UNECE's review of Albania's implementation of recommendations from Environmental Performance Reviews vis-à-vis SDGs and targets was finalised, to be validated nationally in 2020. (Support from UNDP, UNEP, UNECE.)
- National DRR capacities were improved through (i) development of a Hydrogeological Conceptual Model of the Skadar–Shkoder and Buna–Bojana Trans-boundary Aquifer System (Albania–Montenegro) and an Aquifer Comprehensive Vulnerability Map for territory planning and wise exploitation of the trans-boundary aquifer; (ii) advocacy activities on the use of WHO methodology on implementation of water safety action plans for urban and rural water facilities; and (iii) national mapping of genetic resources of plants and livestock and training of experts from the Extension Service Sector, at MoARD and the Regional level, in disaster risk prioritisation, emergency response preparedness and contingency planning for natural disasters affecting the agriculture sector, among others. (Support from UNESCO, WHO, FAO.)
 - Policy and regulatory financial support schemes and measures are being drafted for establishing an enabling environment for rapid uptake of bio-energy technologies, along with guidelines for policy makers on how to develop quality infrastructure in support of national renewable energy technology markets. Of the 40 enterprises supported in preparation of feasibility studies and business plans and completion of the grant application procedure, seven received grant support and have installed several pieces of bio-energy equipment. (Support from United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, UNIDO.)

CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN ALBANIA. YEAR 2019 IN BRIEF



European Union integration continued to be the top priority of Albania's foreign policy in 2019. In May, in its progress report, the European Commission repeated its recommendation, first made in 2016, to the European Council that accession talks should be opened. This recommendation was based on the Commission's positive assessment of the implementation of the justice reform and reforms involving the public administration, the fight against corruption, combating organised crime and the protection of human rights (particularly those of the Roma community)—the five conditions set by the EU before accession talks could begin. However, the European Council in October 2019 failed to give the green light to the opening of negotiations for both Albania and North Macedonia, concluding that the Council should discuss the issue again prior to the EU–Western Balkans summit to be held in Zagreb in May 2020, under the Croatian Presidency of the EU Council.² Reasons cited for the EU decision included the intention to review internally the EU's own enlargement procedures prior to further opening, while continued political blockages in Albania, migration concerns, electoral reform blockages and incomplete judicial reform have all contributed as contextual elements to the debate.

Between June and November 2019, Albania experienced three powerful earthquakes. The first of these, of magnitude 5.3 on the Richter scale, struck on 1 June. A second quake of magnitude 5.8 hit on 21 September and a third earthquake of magnitude 6.4, on 26 November. The last of these quakes was the strongest the country had experienced since 1979 and killed 51 people. The government, with rapid support from the international community, undertook immediate search and rescue operations quickly followed by short-term life-saving assistance for those displaced. Measures included the lodging of people in

hotels, delivery of food and non-food items, and the establishment of a rental subsidy programme. The UN Country Team responded quickly, bolstered by a UN Disaster Assistance Coordination team organised by OCHA and which worked under the umbrella of the EU-led Civil Protection Team, given Albania's location within Europe. UN Agencies—especially UNDP, UN-HCR, UNICEF and WHO—provided immediate relief assistance to the disaster situation.³ The UN received a medal of honour from the Prime Minister of Albania in appreciation of the organisation's rapid support during the immediate response phase.⁴

The prime minister formally requested assistance from the EU, the United Nations and the World Bank to undertake a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) on 6 December. The results of the PDNA were released on 5 February 2020, to further support preparations of the Together for Albania Donor Conference.⁵ Most of the damage was recorded in the housing sector, followed by the productive sector (e.g. business, tourism, agriculture and cultural heritage), and the education sector. In order to address the effects of the damage and the revenue lost as a result of the earthquake, the assessment concluded that nearly EUR 1.08 billion would be needed across all sectors for recovery. Several UN agencies played a leading role in the PDNA, especially UNDP and UNICEF.

In the political sphere, polarisation persisted throughout 2019. Parliamentary activities were affected by a

prolonged boycott by opposition parties carrying over from 2018, who then also relinquished en bloc their parliamentary mandates in February 2019. Subsequently, the centre-right opposition led monthly protests demanding new general elections, raising tensions, though the government did not cede to their demands. Albania held municipal elections on 30 June despite a decision of the President to cancel the vote (on the grounds of political tensions) and a boycott by the main opposition parties. Electoral reform remains a contested topic fuelling the political polarisation with the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for June 2021. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) recommendations from several past elections have yet to be implemented, though multi-layered negotiations are (haltingly) under way.

Meanwhile, Albania's deep judicial flagship reform continues, with a comprehensive vetting process being undertaken for all judges and prosecutors and the establishment of new judicial structures. New appointment procedures and national investigative offices will guarantee a much greater protection from political influence and greater independence. More than 50 percent of the judges and prosecutors so far reviewed by the Independent Qualification Commission have been removed following vetting, largely due to their inability to justify their wealth. The process has resulted in a serious shortage of judges, critically in the Constitutional Court, and created serious backlogs across the judicial system. Differing understandings by Parliament and the President of the procedure for appointment of Constitutional Court judges triggered a mini crisis within the reform, calmed temporarily via an appeal to the Council of Europe's advisory Venice Commission. Despite the slower than expected progress, several key new institutions have been established and are now functional, including the High Judicial Council, High Prosecutorial Council and Justice Appointment Coun-

cil. The vetting is foreseen to be completed in 2021.

In addition to these new judicial institutions, other structures to tackle corruption and organised crime have been established or strengthened. In December 2019, eight prosecutors were sworn in before the President to establish the Special Anti-Corruption and Organised Crime Structure (*Struktura e Posaçme kundër korrupsionit dhe krimet të organizuar, SPAK*). The National Bureau of Investigation, an independent structure responsible for investigation of criminal offences under the jurisdiction of SPAK, has also been created. Meanwhile, the State Police has begun its own vetting process. Yet, much work lies ahead in the country's fight against corruption. In 2019, Albania dropped seven places from the previous year in the Corruption Perception Index compiled by Transparency International, to 106th out of 180 countries.⁶ Meanwhile, the Rule of Law Index 2020 ranks Albania 78th out of 126 countries, dropping four positions from 2019. Albania's score places it ninth out of fourteen countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region and 29th out of 42 upper middle-income countries.⁷

Starting on January 1, 2020, Albania assumed for the first time the Chairmanship of OSCE. Taking over the Chair is a truly historic moment for the country, highlighting its significant positive transformation. The government has identified the following major priority issues during its term: conflict in the OSCE area, organised crime, violent extremism, cybersecurity, youth and women issues, peace and security. Albania intends to advance the OSCE Structured Dialogue on current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area.

Albania is moderately prepared with regard to reform of the public administration. Some progress is noted in

2. Amid COVID-19 challenges, in its decision of 25 March 2020, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Albania while inviting the Commission to submit a proposal for a framework for negotiations.

3. Detailed information on the support of the UN agencies is provided in Chapter 3 of the Annual Progress Report 2019.

4. The certificate says: "In recognition of the work of the Search and Rescue unit of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team for extraordinary dedication in the search and rescue of lives of those affected by the earthquake, and for selflessness shown by all members of the unit in professionally helping the people in need, in extreme conditions."

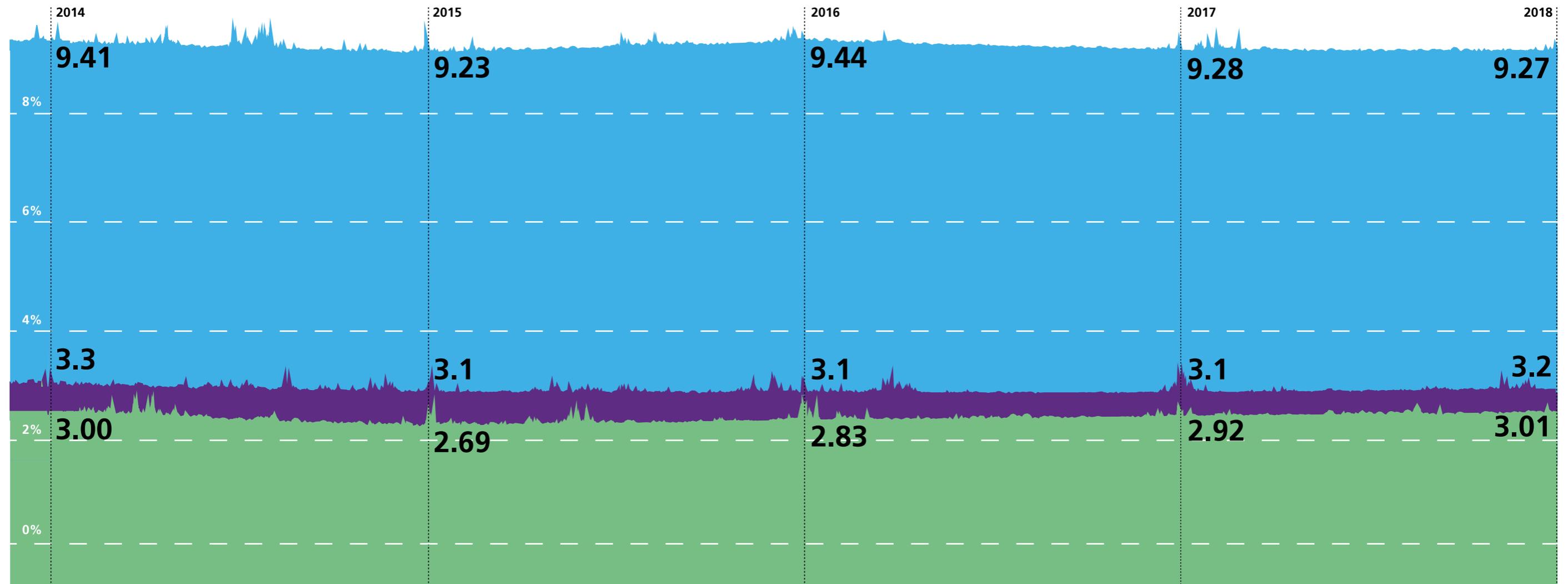
5. On 17 February 2020, at the Together for Albania Donor Conference organised by the EU, the international community pledged more than EUR 1.15 billion in donations, grants and loans to help Albania recover from November's devastating earthquake. The amount is expected to cover the country's recovery needs after the strongest earthquake in decades increased the poverty level by 2.3 percent and reduced Albania's GDP by more than one percent.

6. <https://www.transparency.org/country/ALB>

7. <https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/Albania%20-%202020%20WJP%20Rule%20of%20Law%20Index%20Country%20Press%20Release.pdf>

PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS (PERCENTAGE OF GDP)

■ Social Protection ■ Education ■ Health Care



Source: Albania in figures 2018, INSTAT

the efficiency and transparency of public services delivery, improving the regulatory framework on impact assessment of policies, more transparent recruitment procedures, and overall strengthening of the administration's capacity to undertake merit-based civil service procedures. Consolidation of these achievements should advance, to ensure a more efficient, depoliticised and professional public administration. Moreover, implementation of the public administration reforms implies greater financial accountability for municipalities, particularly with regard to planning, budgeting and monitoring the use of public resources. This crucial local government capacity needs to be developed; local councils and civil society organisations have important oversight roles to play in this respect.⁸

The country is fully committed to protecting and promoting all human rights and has complied overall with international human rights instruments and ratified most international conventions related to integration of the protection of fundamental rights. Nevertheless, overall implementation of human rights instruments remains to be strengthened, while further efforts are needed in relation to the consolidation of property rights. In 2019, Albania submitted its 3rd cycle report to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR); the 5th and 6th Periodic Reports on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child; National Report on the Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action. UNCT Albania, National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) submitted alternative and shadow reports to the UPR session, Beijing+25, Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (submission on 4 recommendations).

Albania received Concluding Observations from the

8. 2019 EU Progress Report and UN Albania MAPS report.

committees on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Migrant Workers, and Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Parliament headed the national delegation and the country's commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)+25 at the Nairobi Summit to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. The monitoring process on implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2020 at the country level achieved a level of accomplishment of 63 percent by the end of 2019. Also, Albania's platform, established in 2018 with the support of UN in Albania, to conduct a comprehensive monitoring and reporting on Human Rights Conventions recommendations is fully functional.⁹ Moreover, the country has reduced significantly the risk of statelessness by amending the Law 'On Civil Status', resolving gaps in birth registration for 1,031 children. Regarding freedom of expression, the Assembly of Albania, at its plenary session on 18 December 2019, approved a package of legislation amending the law on audio-visual media services and the law on electronic communications. On 12 January 2020, amendments to the media law were sent back to Parliament by presidential decree. Currently, the proposed amendments to the media law are with the Venice Commission for review. An official opinion is expected on 21 March 2020.

According to the Human Development Report 2019, Albania ranks 69th out of 189 countries and territories, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.791, putting the country in the high category, and just short of the very high category. Between 1990 and 2018, Albania's HDI increased by 23 percent. The 2020 Global Gender Gap Index ranks Albania 36th out of 149 countries, noting the country as one of the top five most improved (along with Ethiopia, Spain, Mali and Mexico) in the overall index, recording a substantial

9. http://tedrejtatenjeriut.punetegashtme.gov.al/WD220AWP/WD220Awp.exe/CONNECT/UN_System_en
<https://www.un.org.al/news/albania-launches-platform-monitor-implementation-human-rights>

increase in women's presence in political institutions. Moreover, the report mentions Albania as the best regional performer with the Political Empowerment indicator. Meanwhile, for the 2020 Gender Equality Index, Albania scored 60.4, seven points fewer than the EU-28 average, except in the domain of power where Albania has a higher gender parity than the EU-28, at 60.9 and 51.9, respectively.

In December 2019, Albania published the main results of the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey (EU-SILC) covering 2017 and 2018,¹⁰ measuring living conditions, relative poverty and material deprivation in Albanian households. This was a significant achievement because no new poverty data had been published since 2013 and also because now Albania will follow the EU standard approach. The main indicator is at-risk of poverty (relative poverty), used for assessing the percentage of individuals with incomes below 60 percent of the median equivalised income, also defined as the relative poverty line. By 2018, the at-risk of poverty rate in Albania had decreased by 0.3 percentage points from the previous year, to 23.4 percent compared to 23.7 percent in 2017, and the country now ranks above Romania (23.5%) and Serbia (24.3%).

Albania's social care sectors constantly suffer from the unsatisfactory level of public sector investment.¹¹ The country spends three percent of GDP on education and health, nine percent on social protection, including social insurance programmes, which occupy 80 percent of total allocations, and less than one percent on child and family allowances, which include

10. <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6544/income-and-living-conditions-in-albania-2017-2018.pdf>

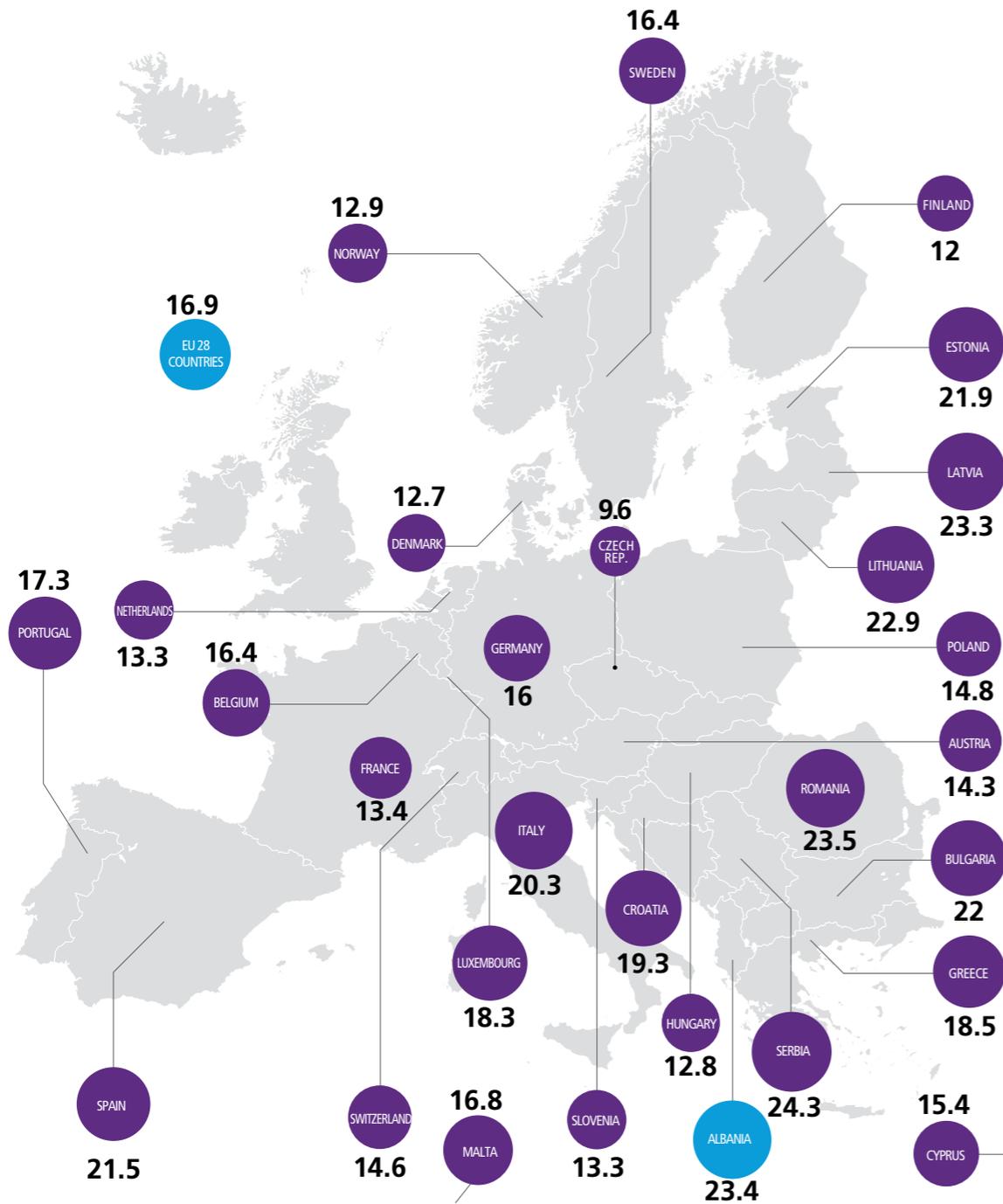
11. Partly explained by the substantial level of informality that hinders tax collection in the country as the size of the informal sector is estimated to account for about 50 percent of GDP. As a result, tax collection stands currently at 25.9 percent of GDP (2019–2020) and, according to the medium-term budget framework, is expected to remain at similar levels over the next four years, while it is lower than that of other countries in the region (Serbia, 34%; North Macedonia, 29%) and the EU average (currently > 40%).

cash transfers for poverty and disability. Public spending on social inclusion programmes also remains very modest. A 2018 review on local and central public budget spending on social care services, conducted by the UN in Albania Leave No One Behind programme, revealed that the share of this sector's budget to GDP decreased from 1.4 percent in 2017 to 1.32 percent in 2018. Cash transfers continue to constitute about 95 percent of the overall budget of the social protection sector, and when stripped of cash transfers, this budget constituted just 0.4 percent of the total government budget for 2018. For education, the largest part of the spending (>50%) is on basic education, with the rest for secondary (professional and general) and higher education.¹² Recent social policy development in Albania, providing for better integration of people with disabilities into the Albanian labour market, includes approval (in March) of a new employment promotion law requiring the establishment of a national Employment Social Fund to support their integration into the labour market, and a new law on social assistance (July), which will provide an additional incentive for boosting employment among such people.

Population dynamics present additional challenges to the governance and development of Albania. The country's population is getting older, putting pressure on the social insurance and pension schemes. INSTAT population projections reveal that the Albanian population will decline during the next decade, from 2.86 million in 2020 to 2.75 million in 2030. The share of elderly Albanian population cohorts (age 65 and above) will, according to INSTAT projections, rise from 14.7 percent in 2020 to 21.8 percent in 2030. As the share of working-age cohorts (15–64 years of age) is projected to fall (from 68% to 62% over this period), this implies a sharp increase (from 21.5% to 35%) in the old-age dependency ratio. In addition,

12. Government of Albania Economic Reform Programme 2019–2021.

AT RISK OF POVERTY RATE BY COUNTRIES, 2018 (IN %)



Source: Income and living conditions in Albania 2017-2018, INSTAT

tion to threatening the financial sustainability of retirement and disability pensions, these trends can also be expected to further strain the state health insurance system's finances. Moreover, as in other Western Balkan countries, there has been a significant rural-urban shift, a drop in fertility rates and a high level of emigration. Figures confirm that there remains a high level of desire among Albanians to emigrate. A significant number of health sector graduates, including nurses and doctors, have been successful in finding employment in the EU. Between 60 and 83 percent of Albanians want to leave their country according to a recent study by Gallup, which placed Albania fourth out of 152 countries included in the survey for the proportion of citizens most wanting to leave.¹³ Albania also sits at the top of European countries in the Human Flight and Brain Drain Index, which measures the number of young educated people who want to leave the country permanently.¹⁴

Migration pressures on the one hand could exacerbate social trends, and on the other provide the country with new development opportunities. The topic of emigration is politicised, in Europe as part of the debate about accession, irregular migration and organised crime, and in Albania as evidence cited by the opposition of failures of governance. With regard to the flow of third-country nationals through Albania, with some seeking asylum, the country has demonstrated a position in line with the pan-European approach. The legal framework for migration and asylum is broadly in line with the EU *acquis* and UN norms. In June 2019, government approved the National Strategy on Migration 2019–2022, and its Action Plan, addressing a major gap in policy since 2010.

Albania has received mixed migration flows since the migration crisis of 2015, and in the last two years has witnessed an increase. The country has signed a Status Agreement with the EU on actions carried out in Albania by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, FRONTEX. Not only does this underline the country's interest in moving towards EU integration, it is also a first for any country outside the EU itself. Since the end of Communism, Albania has never closed its borders and makes significant efforts to respect international asylum-seeking procedures, even while the vast majority of those starting the process in Albania subsequently disappear, presumably to continue northward. Institutional capacity for border management and asylum and reception capacity to deal with mixed migration flows has increased. Nonetheless, the number of arrivals at the borders has doubled compared to the same period of 2018. In 2019, arrivals of refugees and migrants in Albania increased by 85 percent from the year before, totalling 10,557 persons. Asylum requests correspondingly increased by 52 percent from 2018, totalling 6,677. An increase in the proportion of women, children and families arriving and requesting asylum was particularly noted. They constituted 24 percent and 36 percent, respectively, of the total figures. The flow remains transitory in nature, however, with approximately 99 percent of new arrivals requesting asylum and then leaving the country after a few days. By the end of 2019, Albania had hosted 142 refugees and long-term asylum seekers.

After expanding to 4.1 percent in 2018, annual growth slowed to 2.2 percent in 2019, mostly due to a plunge in energy production as a result of a drastic decline in rainfall in the first half of the year and the consequences of the earthquake. Services and construction led the growth that did take place. Albania's economy had initially been forecast to grow by between 3.5 percent and 4.1 percent in 2020; however, between the post-earthquake recovery and the COVID-19 crisis, the

13. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245255/750-million-worldwide-migrate.aspx>

14. https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/human_flight_brain_drain_index/Europe/

Ministry of Finance and Economy downgraded this to two percent. Preserving macro-fiscal stability is crucial to supporting sustainable growth, as well as enhancing conditions for private sector development, such as improving the business environment and boosting financial access, energy security and human capital.¹⁵ Despite the reduced growth, job creation strengthened and unemployment (age 15–64 years) declined to 11.6 percent by the end of the year, from 12.7 percent in 2018, credited mostly to new jobs created in the services industry. By mid-2019, labour force participation reached 60.6 percent—a new record in the region. The female participation rate (age 15–64 years) rose above 53 percent, narrowing further the gender gap. Yet, despite improvements, Albania continues to face challenges in ensuring safe and productive employment for its population, promoting better and more productive jobs, and ensuring the integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market, particularly those in need, and especially women and youths.

Albania's economic freedom score is 66.5, the 52nd freest among 186 countries, according to the 2019 index. Its overall score has increased by two points, led by dramatic improvement for the second consecutive year in fiscal health and higher scores for judicial effectiveness, labour freedom and government spending. Albania ranks 27th among 44 countries in Europe, with an overall score below the regional average but above the global average.¹⁶ The World Bank Doing Business Report 2020 ranks Albania 82nd out of 190 economies, a decrease of 19 positions from the 2019 report, largely to underperformance in almost all indicators except for improvements in 'getting electricity'.¹⁷ In addition, the country has dropped five positions in

the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2019, which ranks Albania 81st out of 141 countries. Problems persist in security and response to organised crime, property rights, road infrastructure, protection of intellectual property and in the effect that taxes and subsidies have on the country's competitiveness. Meanwhile, progress is noted in skills in the work force, facilitating the employment of foreigners, electricity access for the population, and capacity to develop the field of own information technology.

Strengthening regional cooperation rests at the centre of Albania's foreign policy and leads the country's constructive approach and active leadership in the region. Albania is part of the Regional Economic Area (REA) for the Western Balkans, an initiative supported by the EU for the six Western Balkan Countries (WB6) in the context of the Berlin Process and the Trieste Summit. The country is vested in the expansion and intensification of multi-lateral regional cooperation with the aim of implementing the decisions made under the Berlin Process in support of development projects, energy and infrastructural interconnections, and for regional economic cohesion. According to the Small or Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Policy Index 2019, Albania continues to be the region's leader with regard to the SME Operational Environment for business registration and licensing, and in providing services to the public. GoA took an active part in all activities related to successful implementation of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Ionian Adriatic Pipeline (IAP) projects.

The government has worked closely with international institutions in implementation of the World Bank Group project Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion to formulate and endorse the Regional Investment Reform Agenda (RIRA). Albania hosts the Secretariats of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) and the Western Balkans Fund (WBF), highlighting the belief that neighbourly rela-

tions and mutual trust can strengthen the security and stability of the entire region. Currently, RYCO and WBF are fully operational and have started to meet their objectives through issuing calls for regional projects in key areas, to promote mobility and exchanges, with a priority on youth, gender equality and sustainable development. Implementation of the projects in the call will give concrete impetus to initiatives that promote regional cooperation. Beyond the current initiative, regional thinking has started across UNCTs in the WB to prepare for a request for Peacebuilding Fund eligibility.

Moreover, as of 1 January 2019, the former Albanian MP and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Majlinda Bregu, took office as the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council for the term 2019–2021, following her appointment by the ministers of Foreign Affairs of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) at the meeting held on 23 April 2018 in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia. The new RCC Secretary General is committed to continuing working with all stakeholders for advancement of the political climate of dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance and openness towards cooperation, as key preconditions for the stability and prosperity of the SEE region and its citizens.

Incidentally, the prime ministers of Albania and North Macedonia, together with Serbia's President, signed, on 11 October 2019 in Novi Sad, northern Serbia, a declaration of intent to establish the free movement of people, goods, services and capital between the three countries. The 'mini-Schengen' is to become operational in 2021, when citizens will be able to cross the borders of each of the three states with an ID card "at most". The initiative is open to the remaining members of the WB6.

15. Western Balkans Regular Economic Report no. 16.

16. 2019 Index of Economic Freedom, <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/albania>

17. Albania increased the reliability of power supply by rolling out a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) automatic energy management system for the monitoring of outages and the restoration of service.

CHAPTER 2

AGENDA 2030 ALBANIA ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS SDGs



In 2019, UN supported the Albanian government in launching the establishment of interim targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would feed into preparation of a new National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2021-2030.

In parallel, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was supported by UNDP in conducting a mid-term review of the current NSDI. Prior discussion was initiated with the PMO for drafting a Vision 2030 document that lays out longer term priorities for the country, and institutionalisation of monitoring and reporting alongside statistical capacity building. The UN also supported Albania's chairmanship of the SDG Regional Forum of March 2019. Albania's Minister of Health and Social Protection, Ms Ogerta Manastirliu, chaired the SDG Regional Forum, which gathered 850 participants from 50 countries and shared Albania's experience in achievement of the SDGs and reflections of the country's 2018 Voluntary National Review to the High-Level Political Forum in New York.

In collaboration with government and partners, in 2019, UN Albania identified catalytic actions to support priority areas of SDG achievement in the framework of NSDI 2015–2020 and the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021 and mobilised relevant resources for their implementation through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. In October 2019, the Joint Executive Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator met to discuss achievement of the SDGs in the context of implementation of PoCSD 2017–2021, and allocation of SDG Acceleration funding to areas that promote multiplier SDG achievement results. Henceforth, the Fund received the first tranche of the Government of Albania contribution to an amount of

USD 0.5 million to support (i) municipal social protection service delivery, (ii) child protection, (iii) DRR and Climate Change, and (iv) capacity building for enhancing employability. The Albanian government has committed an annual contribution of USD 2 million to the Fund and, with this leading contribution, other, flexible, matching funds will be sought from partners. For the first time, the Government of Norway made a contribution of USD 0.85 million to the Fund for areas aligned to their overall development strategy for Albania (governance and democratic development, human rights and economic development). In 2018–2019, the governments of Sweden and Switzerland supported the Fund with contributions for gender equality and social inclusion. All actions supported by the Fund are in line with the accelerators of SDGs in Albania, identified in the MAPS report that was launched by the Albanian government in September 2018: i) governance and the rule of law, ii) investments in an inclusive, green economy, and iii) investment in social and human capital.

The role of Parliament is crucial in terms of financing the SDGs. For several years, UN in Albania has advocated with government and Parliament for more effective and equitable budget allocations for health, education and social protection, including child protection. As Albania will hold elections in 2021, a new impetus will be provided to reinvigorate the discussion on SDGs especially in the light of greater financing for social sectors. Moreover, within the Economy and Finance

Commission of Parliament, a dedicated sub-committee on Sustainable Development will be established in early 2020 with a mandate on social economic development, sustainable economic development, achievement of SDGs and Agenda 2030.

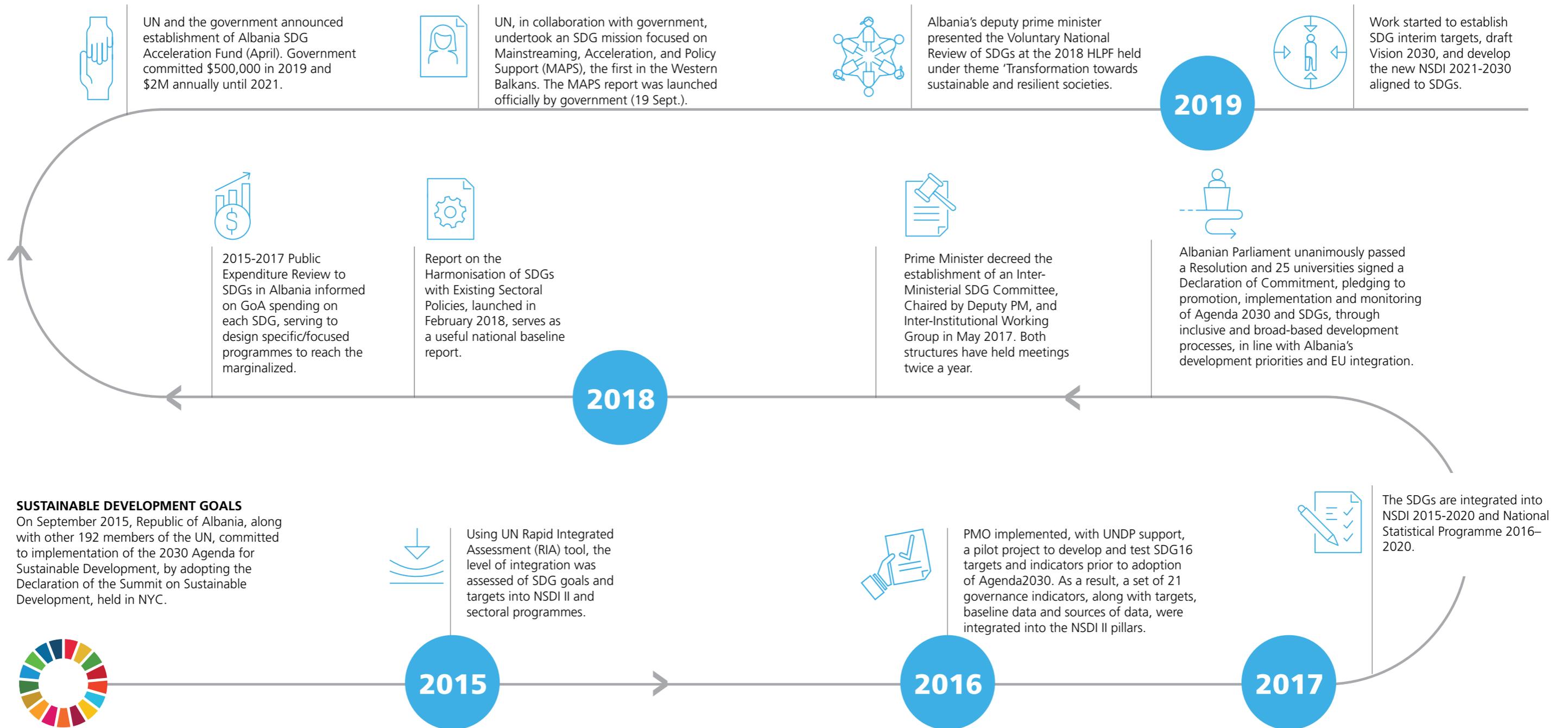
INSTAT remains an important partner to the UN in Albania. The close collaboration, through the joint UN-INSTAT Data Group, continued throughout 2019. It resulted in the first publication of statistical indicators and the launch of the Dashboard platform on the INSTAT website, made possible through UNDP's continuous support to the institution in its SDG-related efforts. Joint efforts are progressing for preparation of the 2020 Albanian Population and Housing Census, and UN agencies are providing continuous support for capacity development of INSTAT, and participation of institute staff in regional and global workshops, among other efforts. In addition to the support provided to INSTAT, UN agencies are assisting statistics development in various sectors and areas, including gender equality, gender-based violence, child protection, health, migration, social inclusion, education, environment, agriculture, rural development, human rights, and employment, with focus on vulnerable or marginalised groups. Details of this work are presented in Chapter 3 of the present report.

Extending partnerships with the private sector has been at the focus of the UN work throughout 2019, while promoting the SDG Global Compact to align the

actions of companies with SDG-oriented actions. For example, in May 2019, on its 20th anniversary, the Albanian Association of Banks organised an international conference to discuss Banks for Sustainable Development. This event aimed to ensure the participation of reputable international institutions and national policymakers, financial institutions and the UN to discuss recent developments among a broad array of topics on sustainable development, as well as to rekindle the Global Compact.

Looking ahead to 2020, the UN plans to support the Albanian government in finalising establishment of interim targets for the SDGs and drafting of a Vision 2030 document. Support will be provided to Parliament for implementation of its SDG Action Plan, including strengthening Parliament's monitoring and oversight competencies. The Ministry of Finance and Economy will be supported for development of a National Investment Framework on SDGs, aiming to ensure that budgets are allocated to priority areas and serve as a tool to be used by development finance institutions at the central level, institutions at the local level, and private sector investors to identify the investments that might work best to support Albania's needs towards the achievement of SDGs. Nationwide awareness raising will continue, along with partnership building to deepen efforts, including through engagement with the private sector and the mobilisation of contributions to the SDG Acceleration Fund.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (JOURNEY IN ALBANIA)



CHAPTER 3
**DELIVERING
RESULTS FOR
ALBANIA**

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OUTCOME 1

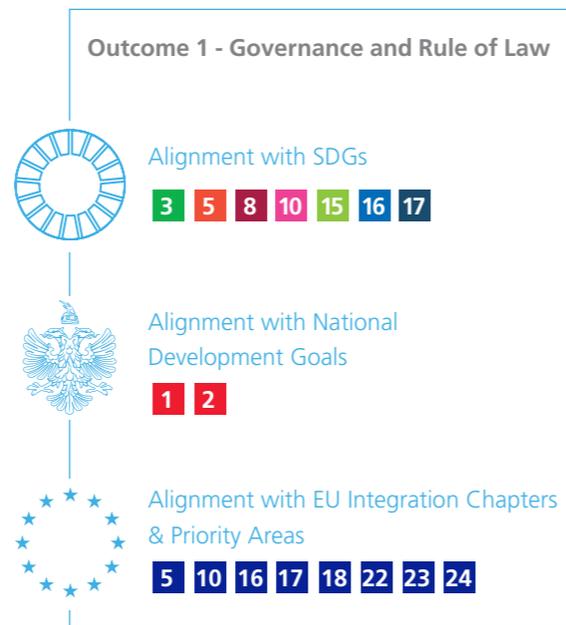
Governance and Rule of Law

State and civil society organisations perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards.

Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law—consists of six outputs focusing on 1) Human Rights, 2) Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law, 3) Local Governance, 4) Access to Justice, 5) Mainstreaming Gender and Gender-Responsive Budgeting, and 6) Migration and Asylum.

This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving two priorities of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, and 2) Consolidate good governance, democracy, and the rule of law. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 16 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 5, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23 and 24.

The total budget available for implementation of Outcome 1 in 2019 was USD 8.4 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as the European Union, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the UN regional and global funds. The outcome delivery was 90 percent.



Outcome 1 delivery (USD million), 2019



Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that out of 39 targets, **35 (90%) are on track, two (5%) are partially on track, and two (5%) have not progressed.** For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2019
% women in government ministerial positions	MPs 21% Municipal Councillors, 35% Public Sector, 44.6%	MPs 29% Municipal Councillors 43.61% Public Sector 57%
Perceptions of performance of public institutions	CEC 8% Parliament 10% Government 14% Local Government 13%	CEC 11% Parliament 10% Government 18% Local Government 21%
Rate of children in detention (per 100,000 population aged 14–17)	179	42
No. of seizures by PCU increased	60%	80%
No. LGUs operating OSS for service delivery	3	33
No of municipal action plans that have a budget line for youth, including education and SRH.	0	9
61 Municipalities have in place a physical archiving system and have increased their capacities, legal knowledge and skills on physical archiving.	0	61
Number of municipalities with web pages meeting transparency legal requirements	21	61
Number of municipalities implementing the transparency performance measurement system	0	17
Number of municipalities publishing Council Decisions online	27	61
Establishing Free Legal Aid Centers at District Court level to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice to the most vulnerable persons	0	5 (UNDP supported)
Extent of gender mainstreaming in the central budgeting process	24 MTBPs	38 MTBPs
Reception capacities at the border increased, with a differentiated approach for women and children at risk.	1 centre	3 centres

OUTPUT 1.1 - HUMAN RIGHTS

Constitutional, ministerial and independent mechanisms are reinforced to identify and report human rights violations and enable evidence-based policy making and response



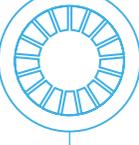
Contributing UN Agencies
UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, IOM



Contributing Partners
UN Women Fund for Gender Equality



Financial Amount (USD)
325,141



Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 16, 17

Targets: 3.1, 4.5, 5.2, 5.5, 5.6, 8.5, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 16.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 16.b, 17.18

Implementation progress

Albania has ratified most of the international human rights instruments and stands committed to contributing to the international protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Albanian institutions continue to further improve legal, policy and institutional frameworks and mechanisms to ensure the protection of human rights.

UN Albania is a strong supporter of state institutions, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), parliamentary bodies, the Central Election Commission and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to monitor, report and advocate for implementation of national and international legal instruments, and also to collect data to provide evidence-based recommendations, perform core functions and increase outreach, including for child rights, access to territory and asylum, and improve gender-responsive electoral management.

Through UN support, in 2019, Albania submitted its 3rd cycle report to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), accepting 186 out of 197 recommendations and noting the other eleven.¹⁸ Within the context of the UPR preparations, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs launched the online

18. Albania was reviewed in the 1st UPR cycle on 2 December 2009. The second national report on the human rights situation in the country was submitted in January 2014 in the context of the second cycle the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The review took place during the nineteenth session of the Working Group of UPR, on April 2014. Albania received a total of 165 recommendations, which were assessed by the Government.



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT TO INVEST IN YOUNG GIRLS NAIROBI SUMMIT

platform Human Rights Action Plan and Monitoring Mechanism to facilitate the monitoring process of the implementation of the UPR recommendations of the second cycle, and other treaties-based bodies recommendations related to UPR recommendations. Moreover, on 1 April 2019, the Ministry, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), organised a side event¹⁹ on the UPR, aiming to (i) increase national engagements with human rights and specifically UPR; (ii) share good practices related to protection of human rights; (iii) increase awareness and share key policy actions for achieving sustainable progress, the opportunities and challenges thereof; and (iv) foster dialogue and cooperation with states and international organisations, taking into account the review of Albania under UPR. In addition, the Ministry also held a

19. Held at Palais des Nations Geneva on 1 April 2019 with representatives of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Mission of Albania to Geneva, and representatives of Albanian institutions and of UPR in Geneva.

technical dialogue between the Albanian delegation and representatives of respective institutions, and the Committee on Migrant Workers, on the measures taken for implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

In 2019, the UN Country Team (UNCT) Albania, NHRIs and CSOs also submitted their alternative and shadow reports to the UPR session.²⁰ Meanwhile, the High Commissioner for Human Rights in his letter to Albania's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs pointed out the need for the country to establish a standing, institutionalised national mechanism on human rights reporting and follow-up (termed NMRFs).

20. UNCT Albania prepared and submitted its Confidential Report, and the Monitoring Network Against Gender-Based Violence, its shadow report, to the UPR Pre-Session in Geneva, highlighting remaining challenges in effectively addressing violence against women and girls.



ALBANIA HAS RATIFIED MOST OF THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

In principle, UPR recommendations relate to the full range of SDG Goals under the 2030 Agenda. Many of the recommendations address equality (SDG 5 and 10), peace, justice and accountable institutions (SDG 16), economic and social rights (Goals 1-4 and 6), labour rights and conditions (SDG 8), and international cooperation (SDG 17). Emerging human rights frontiers such as affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), sustainable consumption and production (Goal 12) and climate change (Goal 13) are also given considerations and will merit more attention in future UPR processes. Being more specific, the recommendations under Gender Equality enjoy significant attention in the UPR. Recommendations related to women's rights and gender equality, and the actions taken are linked directly to achievement of targets under SDG 5, with majority linked to SDG target 5.2 to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and deal with harmful traditional practices such as child early and forced mar-

riages and target 5.6 women's reproductive health and rights. Actions taken to address these recommendations contribute to the achievement of SDG indicators 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.6.1 and 5.6.2. Women's rights are not confined to Goal 5 only but reflected in a cross-cutting manner, including issues such as women's equal access to education (4.5) and the labour market (8.5), and the challenge of maternal mortality (3.1).

Incidentally, in April, UN Women and UNFPA, with the support of OHCHR, organised informative sessions with civil society, including youth organisations, on the UPR review process, as well as a mock session with members of the Working Group to prepare them for the state review.²¹ Moreover, NHRIs, line ministries and

21. Regarding capacity development initiatives, UN Women and UNFPA supported the development of capacities of 38 government representatives, NHRIs and women and youth rights organisations to report on and monitor the human rights record in Albania under the UPR mechanism.

CSOs in Albania involved in human rights reporting attended a three-day training, co-organised by UN Women, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, UNFPA and the OSCE Presence in Albania, on human rights reporting, monitoring and data collection.²² The training adopted a human rights-based approach to data, bringing together relevant stakeholders and developing communities of practice committed to improving the quality, relevance and use of data and statistics consistent with international human rights norms and principles.

The country finalised the 5th and 6th Periodic Reports on implementation of the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols to the UN Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child, supported by UNICEF. The Report included the voices of at least 1,000 children, revealing the perceptions on the realisation of their rights. The special hearing session, called by the Speaker of Parliament prior to the official submission of the Report, concluded with an agreed statement of the priorities for children's rights in Albania for each main stakeholder to implement. In full energy with this effort, UNICEF contributed to the compilation of the Mid-term Implementation Report on the National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child 2016–2020. The special sessions dedicated to the Mid-term Implementation Report, with members of the National Council on the Rights of the Child and the Parliament of Albania, called for immediate measures to improve on the major governance issues at the national and sub-national levels in order to deliver results for children in the country, such as increased budgeting to implement the necessary steps planned under the Action Plan, increased vertical and horizontal coordination among different implementing entities, and more regular or frequent reporting to measure progress.

22. <https://www.un.org.al/news/human-rights-training-brings-data-and-statistics-limelight>

UN Women engaged with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to lead the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +25 (BDPfA +25) National Review, which featured a participatory and inclusive process of five consultative meetings with 73 participants. Albania submitted its national report in April 2019.²³ Furthermore, four members of the Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence, with contributions from another eleven non-governmental organisations (NGOs), prepared and submitted the Beijing +25 CSOs report.

Albania also received Concluding Observations from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW), and Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).²⁴ The latest national reports to these committees were prepared and submitted in 2017, to CRPD, and in 2018, to CMW and CERD. Yet, despite slow but steady progress, government was late in its reporting obligations under four treaties: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

UN Women, on behalf of UNCT Albania and based on UN agencies inputs, prepared a submission for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee on implementation of four recommendations of the

23. https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/RCM_Website/Albania.pdf

24. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/ALIndex.aspx>

Committee²⁵ that were part of the 2016 Concluding Observations on Albania. The upcoming CEDAW report on Albania will be submitted in 2020. UN Women will support government for submission of the national report and also the People's Advocate for preparation of an alternative report to CEDAW.

Based on its work with CSOs, with a specific focus on violence against women and girls with disabilities, UN Women provided contributions to UNCT's submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in the context of the consideration of the state report submitted in 2017 to the Committee. Violence against women with disabilities is a topic that is little known, discussed and addressed, but requires increased attention.

Following approval of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2018–2020, a monitoring process on implementation of the WPS Agenda at the country level was conducted with UN Women support, intending to institutionalise systematic reporting, as well as strengthen accountability for implementation of the Agenda at the country level.²⁶ In the frame of the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) project, UN Women's continued support to the Coalition of CSOs on WPS resulted in the Coalition's development of a joint work plan (JWP), through a participatory process, for active engagement in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in partnership with other stakeholders. As part of the JWP activities of the Coalition, monitoring of implementa-

tion of the NAP was carried out by a working group established for this task only and composed of government institutions and CSOs, and was approved by the National Council of Gender Equality in January 2020. The monitoring report showed implementation of the NAP at a level of 63 percent during its first year only, and called for (i) continuation of the cooperation with civil society and international organisations as an indicator of policies that are comprehensive, well thought out and harmonised with various stakeholders various, (ii) implementation of training and capacity building activities for Gender Equality Officers at the central level, and (iii) localisation of NAP through the realisation of the WPS Agenda in LGUs. Key implementation achievements included, for example, (i) increase in the number of women members of the Parliamentary Commission on National Security – in 2019 the Commission was led by a woman and included 3 women members, compared to 2017 and 2018 when the Commission had only two women members; (ii) increase in the participation of women in the military force – 8 percent increase in women officers and 10.7% increase in women non-commissioned officers compared to 2017. This initiative contributes to the achievement of SDG 16, particularly targets 1.6 and 16.7 and related indicators.

The Albanian Parliament continued to improve its action during 2019 in defence of child rights, supported by UNICEF. In particular, the parliamentarians group Friends of Children was supported to maintain child rights high on the agenda, both in the legislative work of Parliament and in its public oversight role, particularly as the latter is still underutilised. Independent Human Rights Institutions were also supported in their monitoring and reporting capacities with regard to child rights, in providing remedies and upholding the rights of the child, while promoting a stronger dialogue with Parliament. In this regard, 2019 saw adoption of a new Law on Social and Economic Aid, a Law on Budget (2020) more responsive to child rights, and

amendments to the Law on the Use of Iodised Salt. In addition, Parliament held several ministers accountable for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the CRC Committee recommendations and the National Child Rights Agenda, as well as the NHRIs in their oversight and remedy-providing role for various violations of child rights. Parliament also passed a Resolution on Children, a framework document providing a set of measured obligations incumbent on the Albanian institutions, such as Parliament, government, judiciary and civil society for improvement of the status of children in the country. As a result of this support, Friends of Children is becoming an ever capable and effective body to address child rights.

The parliamentary sub-commission on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence against Women improved knowledge on population issues and harmful practices relating to Gender-biased Sex Selection and Forced and Early Child Marriage thanks to a joint session on issues related to Population Dynamics and Harmful Practices, organised on the Occasion of ICPD+25 Review by UNFPA and the sub-Commission with participation and contribution of parliamentarians, representatives from line ministries, academics, CSOs, young people, and development partners. Moreover, with the support of UNFPA, Parliament headed the national delegation and the country's commitments to ICPD+25 in Nairobi.²⁷

The People's Advocate continued to improve its oversight role during 2019 and particularly in the defence of child rights, supported by UN agencies in Albania. UN Women, in consultation with other UN agencies, provided input to formulation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2022 of the Office of the People's Advocate. The Office was also supported by UNICEF in 2019 to (i) strengthen its oversight role over the public administration in the area of criminal justice for children

through monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Criminal Justice for Children Code and on the treatment of children deprived of liberty, (ii) prepare information on child rights and ways to seek remedies, for use by teachers and pupils, (iii) reach out to children in local communities to increase their demand for remedies provided by the Advocate, and (iv) engage in constructive dialogue with Parliament to bring to the attention of parliamentarians the challenges of public authorities to guarantee child rights, as well as to highlight challenges related to the limited resources of the Child Rights Protection and Promotion Unit in adequately investigating and providing remedies for violations of child rights. As a result of this support, the People's Advocate has, for the first time, received ten complaints directly from children of violations of their rights. This constitutes a compliance with the Paris Principles and a direct contribution to SDG target 16.a, and particularly indicator 16.a.1.

UN Women, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, studied the level of women's representation in local government bodies.²⁸ The study revealed positive, increased representation of women in decision-making bodies, especially those of local self-governance. At the top executive levels, however, little progress was made. Among 21 municipalities with only one deputy mayor in the structure, none of those officials are reported to be women. Of the 37 municipalities that have two or more deputy mayors, gender representation of women is 30 percent or above in only 15 municipalities. Meanwhile, only 15 percent of municipal administrators are women, while of the 64 reported commercial companies, only nine stated that they are run by women administrators. This initiative contributes to achievement of SDG 5, target 5.5 and indicators 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.

25. These recommendations, part of the 2016 Concluding Observations on Albania, related to improvement of the legal aid system in the country, improvement of gender anti-discriminatory legislation, measures to increase reporting of gender-based violence and strengthening of the enforcement of court decisions related to protection of women from violence.

26. A desk review of existing documents and reports produced by the Albanian authorities on the WPS Agenda was examined, and is considered a solid basis and used for informing the monitoring process. The desk research intended to take stock of the work done by the government authorities (including all line ministries: Mol, MoHSP, MoFA, MoD) on the WPS Agenda, as well as the work plans of 31 CSOs on implementation of NAP for UNSCR 1325.

27. <https://www.nairobisummitcpd.org/commitments>

28. https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20albania/attachments/publications/2019/05/web_kmd_gender_report_en.pdf?la=en&vs=3700



THE ALBANIAN DELEGATION IN THE NAIROBI SUMMIT

Reducing the number of stateless individuals is a lengthy process due to administrative and judicial procedures. Nevertheless, in 2019, persons at risk of statelessness were successfully assisted and the 2018 legal amendments to the Law on Civil Registry brought Albania close to preventing some 90 percent of potential new cases. UNHCR estimated there were 1,031 persons at risk of being stateless at the beginning of 2019, through a multi-institutional effort to identify cases over a three-month period. Such individuals without birth or citizenship registration are predominantly Roma or children born abroad returning to the country. In the absence of implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid, UNHCR, through its partner Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS), provided legal aid services for 472 persons at risk of statelessness. The cases were referred by relevant government and non-government actors and managed through legal aid services throughout administrative and court procedures. TLAS resolved 358 cases, while 114 cases will

be followed up in 2020. In parallel, advocacy was conducted regarding implementation of the revised Law on Civil Status and related by-laws. TLAS's group of legal experts drafted four by-laws in the year related to the revised Law on Civil Status, resulting in the adoption of six required by-laws that entered into force in May 2019. The same group of experts drafted comments on the revised Law on Citizenship, presented by UNHCR during a hearing of the National Security Committee of the Albanian Parliament.

UNHCR also supported government in its efforts to achieve the pledges made during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness during the Global Refugee Forum,²⁹ enabling Albania to meet its commitment to eradicate statelessness. The pledges made by Albania at the Global Refugee Forum are focused on the integration of refugees through eliminating legal inconsistencies and administrative barriers preventing refugees and asylum seekers from effectively accessing rights, and issuing personal ID numbers and cards to them, facilitating effective access to the right to personal security. At the same time UNHCR also focused on increasing the country's capacity to protect refugees by ensuring that asylum procedures are fair and efficient and by strengthening the quality of asylum decision making.

UN agencies collaborated closely with INSTAT to improve the country's statistical framework during 2019. UNHCR and TLAS held four meetings with INSTAT, providing recommendations on the methodology of data collection for persons at risk of statelessness through the 2020 Census. INSTAT received support also from

29. A high-level meeting in Geneva, co-organised by UNHCR and the government of Switzerland, took place on 17–18 December 2019 with the participation of senior government officials, international financial organisations, business leaders, humanitarian and development actors, refugees, and civil society representatives. Albania was represented by the acting minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, H.E. Gent Cakaj. During his speech to the forum, outlining the three pledges being made by Albania, Mr Cakaj emphasised a commitment to strengthen the protection and inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, in collaboration with UNHCR, the EU and other international partners.

UNICEF with regard to the training of data collectors for the questionnaire testing of Census 2020, with special attention paid to questions on impairments, and the European Health Interview Survey. Both surveys have a significant role in the generation of new data, including those on children and youth. Through the coordination of INSTAT and in the framework of the EU accession agenda, UNICEF supported the inter-sectoral government task force, established to propose alignment of national statistics with the International Classification of Crime Statistics. The alignment will enable the generation of new official statistics that are comparable internationally. Technical work is taking place in two domains: mapping of alignment for the penal code, and the statistical information management systems. This process is expected to last for at least 15 months, given the in-depth technical discussions and agreements to be reached.

Challenges

The tension in the political system put at risk the bi- and multi-partisan nature of the Friends of Children caucus. To address this issue, UNICEF advocated with the members of the new opposition on the importance of having different views on possible solutions to child rights challenges and, as a result, a good number of parliamentarians did join the caucus.

UNICEF offered temporary human resources support to the Child Rights Protection and Promotion Unit at the People's Advocate, and also promoted dialogue between this NHRI and Parliament around a potential increase in the budget for human resources for the Unit. Despite these efforts, the NHRI did not manage to obtain a positive response from Parliament during the reporting year. UNICEF will continue to support the People's Advocate with more strategic communi-

cation with Parliament to increase the chances of a positive response in the following year. Without sufficient dedicated staff, the proactive role of the People's Advocate to influence the demand of children for this NHRI's remedies remains constrained.

Although the legal framework has improved, the legal services offered by relevant stakeholders for cases regarding confirmation of nationality remain limited due to the lack of properly trained staff and financial resources. The training of Albanian consulate officials in countries with a large Albanian diaspora needs strengthening. Identification mechanisms of persons at risk of statelessness nonetheless need to be further strengthened through training and technical support provided to local stakeholders. The advocacy foreseen for the revision of the Family Code needs to be undertaken in 2020.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

In collaboration with CSOs and National Human Rights Mechanisms, as well as government institutions, UNFPA and UN Women will support the follow-up of the recommendations resulting from the 3rd UPR cycle. UNFPA and UN Women will also provide support relating to the upcoming CEDAW national report, due in July 2020. Support will continue with regard to the Istanbul Convention and UN Women will also support national participation at Beijing+25-related events (CSW64, Generation Equality Forum in Paris), as well as engagement of the national gender equality mechanism in the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

With the completion of the 5th and 6th Periodical Reports to the CRC Committee, UNICEF will continue its advocacy work towards building momentum and

visibility around child’s rights issues. More specifically, UNICEF will engage in generating new evidence in respect of implementation of child rights and continue to support both the legislative and public oversight role of Parliament. In particular, it will continue to support the parliamentarians group Friends of Children in implementing its strategy and action plan.

UN agencies will support Parliament, CSOs, PA and CPD to increase their monitoring role and advocate for further improvement and effective implementation of national legislation in accordance with human rights obligations. UNFPA will continue to support IN-STAT to produce data for better monitoring of human rights-related issues. UN Women will place further focus on women empowerment as leaders at the national and local level, as well as on increasing capacities of public oversight institutions, civil society, media and women beneficiaries to monitor, report and advocate on gender equality commitments.

UNHCR will strengthen the protection monitoring system (through partnership with the People’s Advocate) with a focus on access to territory and asylum for refugees, enhancement of pre-screening tools in border areas and promoting non-discriminatory practices for asylum seekers and refugees. UNHCR will continue to fulfil its mandate on statelessness in 2020 through advocacy and capacity building to bring the administrative practice to international standards, notably on identification, referral and confirmation and acquisition of nationality. UNHCR’s support and advocacy will be conducted in line with the government’s pledges at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in October 2019, namely to: (i) improve access to birth registration procedures for children of Roma and Egyptian communities, and for children of Albanian nationals born outside of the country, by 2021; (ii) align the Law on Citizenship with the 1961 Convention; and (iii) establish and implement a dedicated statelessness determination procedure by 2020. UNHCR will continue to monitor implementation of the revised Law on Civil Status and its respective by-laws, in order to identify any possible gaps and consolidate proper referral mechanisms. The agency will also continue to provide capacity development of government officials for consolidation of implementation of amendments to the Law on Civil Status and the new Law on Citizenship. UNHCR will support the Albanian authorities in establishing a statelessness determination procedure through the preparation of by-laws within the new legislative framework. The agency will continue to provide support to stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness towards the acquisition or confirmation of nationality of about 400 persons. For this purpose, collaboration with the Directorate of Free Legal Aid in the Ministry of Justice and Bar Association will be established.

OUTPUT 1.2 - ANTI-CORRUPTION AND RULE OF LAW

National public administration has greater capacity to improve access to information, address corruption and organised crime, and engage CSOs and media in efforts to strengthen monitoring of reform efforts

Contributing UN Agencies
UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNODC, IOM

Contributing Partners
Governments of Austria, France, Italy, Luxemburg, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Turkey, Russia, Germany, the EU

Financial Amount (USD)
1,064,134

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 3, 8, 16
Targets: 3.5, 3.7, 8.7, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 16.b

Implementation Progress

The new Transparency Report 2019 gives Albania a poor score in the fight against corruption, ranking the country 106th among 180 countries. The ranking follows on from the continuous deterioration of the previous three years: 83rd in 2016, 91st in 2017, and 99th in 2018 (see Chapter 1).

Albania is an active member of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (2016–2019).³⁰ To help improve its capacity to reduce corruption (and trafficking of goods) in trade, the government is also actively involved in the UNODC–World Customs Organisation (WCO) Container Control Programme (CCP) at the Port of Durrës. In an expansion of the programme, in early 2019, the CCP Air Cargo Programme was launched at Tirana International Airport to safeguard shipments by air. This unit is the only operational CCP Air Cargo Unit in South Eastern Europe. Subsequently, 56 customs and border control officers and civil aviation representatives enhanced their knowledge with the support of UNODC. The increase in Albania’s capacities to detect suspicious container activity and abilities to ensure cross-border movements of goods, enhances

30. Through three sub-programmes, the programme addresses strategic themes related to the rule of law, good governance (especially in the areas of organised crime and trafficking in drugs, human beings and goods), countering money laundering, preventing and curbing corruption, supporting the development of national drug and crime policies and strategies and their implementation plans, in line with EU requirements under Chapters 23 and 24, and drug prevention, treatment and care, in line with EU requirements under Chapter 28 of the EU *acquis communautaire*, as well as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

the country's compliance with the national laws and regulations, leading to a better readiness of Albania to effectively counter illicit trafficking and organized crime in line with the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 16 on security and rule of law, targets 16.4 and 16.A, and indicators 16.4.1, 16.4.2, and 16.a.1. In 2019, Durres Port Control Unit (PCU) and Tirana Air Cargo Unit seized more than 5.5 kg of pure heroin, 15 kg of hashish, 137 kg of cocaine, 1.2 million smuggled cigarettes and EUR 26,500 of undeclared currency. The units continue to conduct and report seizures on an ongoing basis.

In the area of organised crime, UNODC finalised the EU-funded project 'Measuring and assessing organised crime in the Western Balkans (MACRO)'. The project established a mechanism to collect available data from the national institutions and developed a standard framework to produce regular, evidence-based analytical reports on organised crime in the Western Balkans, including in Albania. UNODC will release the final regional report³¹ in the course of 2020, describing the trends and patterns observed through the data collected and propose evidence-based policy advice to support developments in the rule of law, address organized crime by better understanding it, and further the EU accession process in the beneficiary jurisdictions, including in Albania, contributing thereby to the implementation of SDG 16, target 16.a, indicator 16.a.1.

In 2019, Albania was the first country to participate in a UNODC pilot rapid assessment of the causes of recidivism. Thirteen focus group interviews were conducted with repeat offenders in three prisons: Ali Demi Women's Prison in Tirana, Fier Prison and Peqin Maximum

Security Prison. This work represents the first research conducted by UNODC on criminal justice matters and could become the basis for a global study on prisons,³² which could assist the Government in finding solutions to address recidivism and ultimately reduce crime thus contributing to SDG 16, target 16.a.

Albania is actively cooperating with UNODC in the field of anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-financing of terrorism (CFT), in particular in the framework of the joint regional UNODC and EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) project on Capacity Building of South Eastern Europe on Financial Investigations. In 2019, 65 experts representing Albanian law enforcement and judiciary institutions underwent two series of financial investigation trainings. The trainings were conducted by a UNODC-certified group of eleven national trainers in financial investigations, following the national curriculum, which will be institutionalised by the Security Academy of Albania in 2020. Moreover, in the framework of cooperation with the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organised Crime (TADOC) and the Federal Financial Monitoring Service of the Russian Federation (Rosfinmonitoring), five officials representing the relevant financial and law enforcement institutions in Albania received training in, respectively, crime intelligence analysis, and analysis and investigation of financial operations. By building the capacity of the Government of Albania in addressing AML/CFT risks and promoting regional cooperation through trainings ensures an effective response and an increased cooperation among agencies, leading to a strengthened overall response to countering illicit financial flows in Albania and beyond in line with SDG 16, target 16.4, indicator 16.4.1.

In the area of terrorism, Albania is actively using the UNODC training manual on foreign terrorist fighters



THE TADOC TRAINING IN ANKARA, TURKEY

for judicial training institutions in South Eastern Europe launched in 2017 and updated in 2019 with translation into Albanian. The manual was launched in December 2019 in the presence of officials from various countries, including Albania. In the area of corruption, Albania increased its capacities in countering corruption by taking part in a series of multi-stakeholder workshops on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and its Review Mechanism organised by UNODC, to consolidate an outcome document aimed at providing a shared vision for all stakeholders in South Eastern Europe in effectively addressing corruption in the region. Civil society representatives from the region, including Albania, collaborated over the joint outcome statement, which spells out concrete and practical steps towards strengthened cooperation in the areas of training and knowledge, implementation of UNCAC and its Review Mechanism and collective action, and

which was endorsed by all contributors in the course of 2019. In December, the joint outcome statement was promoted during a special event in the margins of the eighth session of the Conference of the State Parties to UNCAC and presented as best practice in collective action initiatives for the implementation of UNCAC in South Eastern Europe. Albania's participation in joint anti-corruption initiatives with the involvement of the civil society contributes to providing a unified and joint response to corruption in the region contributing to the achievement of SDG 16, target 16.5, indicator 16.5.1.

Moreover, UNODC supported Albania with six capacity building events in the areas of CFT, countering crypto-currencies and trade-based money-laundering (TBML) with the training of more than 151 officials from Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and law enforcement agencies. This support contributed to an

31. Prior to the final report, a technical report about the gathering of the data in the Western Balkans was produced by UNODC in 2019 to examine the availability of statistical data on crime, and specifically on organised crime available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Macro/Research_brief.pdf

32. This research was part of an international research carried out by UNODC in two other countries (Thailand and Czech Republic). This research is not yet published.

improved understanding by more than 60 percent of the risks posed by the above threats and strengthened inter-agency cooperation, necessary for disruption of terrorist financial networks. These efforts have contributed to strengthening Albania's compliance with international standards, namely UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly the recently adopted (2019) Resolution 2462 on countering the financing of terrorism, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on money laundering standards and OSCE commitments, in line with SDG 16, target 16.4.

In 2019, through IOM support, the strategic planning, coordination and monitoring of Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) strategies and action plans in Albania advanced, specifically for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), with the review of all action plans in a consultative process led by the Coordination Centre for CVE (CCCVE). Following the review, the ministries of Interior, of Finance and Economy, of Education, Sports and Youth, of Health and Social Protection, and of Justice, as well as the CCCVE developed costed action plans, with baselines and indicators, and an indicative budget showing contributions by government, partners and the funding gap. CCCVE regularly organised stakeholder coordination meetings, assisted municipalities to create and strengthen Local Security Councils, and has been finalising an Albanian inter-institutional plan for the process of reintegration of returnees from conflict zones. A protocol is being developed that will specify the roles and responsibilities of each actor for the first 72 hours and beyond.

Albania is part of the French–German-led Roadmap for a sustainable solution by 2024 to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and ammunition in the Western Balkans, implemented in cooperation with UNDP and UNODC. In 2019, Albania was part of the second series of the national coordination meeting on the im-

plementation of the roadmap and hosted the regional coordination meeting aimed at reviewing the progress achieved, outlining existing challenges and informing national counterparts, partners and donors about future activities.

In 2019, as a continuing priority of the government, reform of citizen-centric public services witnessed several important developments, supported by UNDP, in expanding customer services and their monitoring nationwide, and standardisation and simplification of procedures for citizens and businesses. With the appointment of the Authority for the Assessment of Service Delivery in October 2019, and greater emphasis placed on digitization and online services, ease of service and quality remain areas of focus, along with obtaining and addressing feedback and complaints by citizens and businesses, and strengthening capacity, accountability and transparency by institutional service providers.

Through the UNDP ISDA support project, key achievement areas in supporting citizen-centric service delivery reform in Albania encompassed support for innovation and expansion of customer services delivery throughout the country. The greatest achievement in reforming service delivery was the consolidation of an integrated model of central-local service provision offices and standards, which has triggered demand and will be further supported for expansion to all municipalities. The model ensures transparency, reduced bureaucracy and efficiency and contributes directly to making progress towards achieving SDG targets 16.5 - substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms, 16.6 - develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, and 16.10 - ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. UNDP's efforts directly contribute to achieving SDG indicators 16.5.1, 16.6.2 and 16.10.2.

During 2019, UNDP's assistance for the public services reform resulted in:

- a. the successful piloting of a Mobile Delivery Office with two service windows to ensure greater access to central government services for remote communities in Albania, starting with three locations in Tirana County: Baldushk, Shengjergj and Zall-Herr;
- b. the functioning of additional joint ADISA–municipality One-Stop-Shop co-locations, in Belsh, Divjaka, Kukes, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe and Patos, following the pilot in Maliq, accompanied by publication of an ADISA customer services standard manual for public service delivery front office establishment and operations as a guide for municipalities (April 2019);
- c. the launching of ADISA Innovation Lab new life event service information packages including on persons with disabilities, as well as foreigners in Albania, and engagement with Roma and Egyptian (R&E) communities aimed at design services packages that address their needs;
- d. the organisation of a nationwide information campaign on the Citizen Charter, setting out the rights and duties in public service delivery;
- e. the conducting of a 2019 mystery shopping assessment covering 18 key central government institutions in primary focus of the public services reform, with 1,818 visits in 346 branches of 18 institutions in all twelve counties in Albania, conducted in two waves based on ADISA and benchmarked service standards; and
- f. the completion of 2019 Trust in Government opinion poll field work with an upgraded methodology to secure nationally representative data.

In addition, supporting the anti-corruption efforts at the central level, the Integrity Risk Assessment Methodology for central government institutions was drafted for piloting at the Ministry of Justice in its capacity as the National Coordination against Corruption, and capacity building was conducted for 67 staff in preparation for the start of the ministry's integrity plan formulation.

Moreover, with support from UNESCO, the Albanian Media Council (established in 2016) adjudicated its first complaints received from citizens about alleged violations of the journalistic code of ethics by media outlets. The Council also monitored 40 online media over ethical breaches of the Code of Ethics, organised media ethics training in selected media outlets, and raised its visibility through awareness raising campaigns in social media and print media.

Challenges

Despite government commitment for advancement in this area, anti-corruption and rule of law need to have adequate capacities in place, both at the central and the local level, as well as stronger coordination among national partners to ensure effective implementation. Key challenges noted throughout 2019 include insufficient local-level expertise, fragmented accountability and insufficient capacities in M&E, along with absence of an adequate legal framework to effectively fight illicit trafficking of cultural property and still weak cross-sectoral cooperation. As detailed in the section below on the way ahead, UN support to this sector will focus on improving governance, strengthening institutions and reducing vulnerability to corruption, considering the specific needs of women, children and people who may be subject to marginalisation and discrimination. The degree of readiness and preparedness of local government units in adopting customer ser-

vices standards has been an issue, addressed through intensive engagement and solution-oriented interventions on the ground.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNODC will support the Albanian State Police by offering equipment as agreed with the relevant authorities for an enhanced operational capacity in the field of narcotics and other areas in the fight against organised crime. Moreover, the agency will strengthen the scientific and forensic capacities of forensic service providers in accordance with the needs assessment of the Albanian Institute of Scientific Police, and support the country with capacity building in implementation of methods for analysis of new psychoactive substances and precursors, and through provision of relevant equipment. UNODC will also continue to support GoA in the areas of countering money laundering and the financing of terrorism, anti-corruption, asset recovery, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, firearms, enhanced border security capacities in consultation with national authorities, and in countering illicit trafficking, in particular by enhancing control of containers transported by sea or air.

UNESCO will build on the achievements of 2019, through both broadening and deepening capacity building for public institutions and individual and corporate stakeholders, promoting civic engagement, ethics and education, including support for media objectivity, advancing public administration reform, especially through the service delivery reform, and assisting anti-corruption and the fight against organised crime, all of which are key for EU integration. Additionally, UNESCO will continue to assist, with government efforts, enhanced protection and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage through targeted and tailor-made initiatives, raising awareness of the

links between economy, tourism, culture and sustainable development, supporting the prevention of illicit traffic of cultural objects, and, very importantly, supporting a new Law on Culture, backed up by the setting up of a database of stolen works of art and establishment of a permanent cooperation mechanism between key authorities to improve the management of cultural heritage in all its aspects. It is also expected that the new regional programme on the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural objects will start in 2020 through strengthened mobilisation at the regional and sub-regional levels, with well-established cooperation channels, updated legal and technological tools dedicated to inventories, traceability, exercise of due diligence, investigations, adequate means to dispute resolution and restitution processes. UNESCO’s assistance will also take place in the context of the 50th anniversary of the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the UNIDROIT Convention.

UNDP, furthering its support to citizen-centric service delivery reform during 2020, will focus on (i) expansion of ADISA customer services through supporting co-location and mobile delivery deployments, (ii) implementation of service delivery standards through innovative approaches, (iii) enabling of regular performance oversight and citizen feedback, and (iv) supporting of sustainability and capacity consolidation for ADISA. The agency will also continue work with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government’s National Coordinator against Corruption, to prepare its integrity plan implementing the integrity risk assessment methodology UNDP helped put in place for central government institutions.

IOM will continue to assist the CVE Centre in working with different line ministries and local authorities for implementation of the CVE strategy, and for prioritising prevention and reintegration.

OUTPUT 1.3 - LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Local Government Units (LGUs) are able to deliver equitable, quality services and strengthen influence of citizens in decision making



Implementation Progress

The year 2019 marked the end of the first full mandate of the 61 new municipalities resulting from the implementation of the Territorial–Administrative Reform (TAR). The Mid-term Review of the National Strategy on Decentralisation and Local Government (NCSDLG) 2015–2020, finalised in 2019, noted that significant progress had been made in the framework of decentralisation. The review reconfirmed the relevance of the four strategic objectives of NCSDLG and recommended extension of the Strategy timeline until 2022, and the necessity to update the related action plan to 2022 as well. It highlighted several areas in need of further development and support to address the following, among other, challenges: conflicting and overlapping responsibilities and legal inconsistencies between central and local government; further strengthening of the autonomy of local governments and financial management, with property transfer from central to local government; weak human resources; and high turnover of personnel. Considering these shortcomings and challenges, the revised action plan of NCSDLG 2015–2022³³ includes a series of objectives aiming at: the application of ICT integrated administrative services in all municipalities and their administrative units; consolidation of the administrative structure capacities; strengthening of dialogue between central and local government and fostering of

33. The document is not public yet. It is submitted by MoJ to the Council of Ministers for approval. It is currently awaiting Council approval.



THE YOUTH VOICE

mutual accountability practices; consolidation of local revenue systems; improvement of sustainability; simplicity and quality of the transfers system; strengthening of the local public finance administration system; implementation of own functions, ensuring open, transparent and accountable governance; widening the coverage of e-Governance at the local level; and implementation of the civil service law at the local level.

Local governance was seriously impacted by the local elections of June 2019, staged amid political tensions after being boycotted by the parliamentary opposition. The President of the Republic issued a decree to cancel the elections, proposing a new date that was not accepted and eventually condemned by the ruling party. As a result, the June 2019 local elections saw the Socialist Party as the only winner in all 61 municipalities. Since then, the political situation remains fragile and tense, with some mayors resigning or being dismissed.

The opposition continued the political struggle, giving much attention to exposing the criminal past of some local elected leaders; e.g. in Shkodra Municipality, the new elected mayor could not be sworn in having been found to have an undeclared criminal history, and the new mayor of Vora was investigated immediately after taking office, while in Durres, the mayor resigned following problems over the management of the November 2019 earthquake.

In 2019, UNDP attained important achievements throughout its STAR2 project,³⁴ in line with local governance reform priorities, and contributed significantly to the NCSDLG action plan. Overall, STAR2 backbone has been the expansion of the one-stop-shop instrument for municipal administrative services and the

34. The STAR2 project will be completed in March 2020. It is a flagship project of UN and UNDP in Albania. Discussions were ongoing throughout 2019 with relevant partners for the development of a STAR3 project, to be initiated in 2020.

innovative integrity plans piloted in the first six municipalities. By end 2019, STAR2 directly supported the increase of municipalities operating a OSS from 16% to 70%. The objective is to close the gap in the near future and expand the system downwards to the sub-municipal levels. Likewise, the positive experience of integrity plan pilots will be expanded across all municipalities and become the norm. Both interventions directly contribute to achieving SDG targets 16.5 (indicator 16.5.1) - substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms, and 16.6 (indicators 16.6.1 and 16.6.2) - develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

Key results in 2019 from the implementation of STAR 2 project include the following:

Administrative Capacities: 37 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were developed in the field of human resource management, public procurement and finance and budget for nine pilot municipalities³⁵ through on-the-job assistance for development and adoption of SOPs in these municipalities. The practice of SOPs development was also disseminated to 51 municipalities in 2019. Tirana Municipality is the best example of a local government in Albania that has mastered the practice of SOP development and operationalisation. Aiming to raise awareness and also inform the leadership of the local governments of successful models in implementation of decentralised functions, municipal good practices (of the previous mandate) were identified and catalogued in a booklet. *A Practical Manual on Fiscal Administration Procedures in Local Government* was made available to all municipalities. Revenue management action plans were developed for 29 small and medium municipalities³⁶ and

35. Berat, Elbasan, Fushe-Arrez, Gramsh, Kruje, Kucove, Lezhe, Skrapar and Shkoder.

36. Belsh, Bulqize, Cerrik, Delvine, Divjake, Dropull, Finiq, Fushe-Arrez, Has, Himare, Kelcyre, Kolonje, Konispol, Kurbin, Libohove, Librazhd, Maliq, Mallakaster, Memaliaj, Mirdite, Peqin, Prrrenjas, Pustec, Roskovec, Rrogozhine, Selenice, Skrapar, Tepelene and Ure Vajgurore.



ONE STOP SHOP INFORMATION SYSTEM

three models of organisational structures were submitted to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Agency for Support of Local Self-Government (ASLG), following their requests for assistance.

Local Services: Following the piloting process in three municipalities (Elbasan, Pogradec, Polican), during 2019, a One-Stop-Shop Information System (OSSIS) was deployed in 33 LGs,³⁷ bringing the total number of municipalities with a functional system to 36 across Albania. At least 70 administrative municipal services were re-engineered, optimised, catalogued and pre-configured as standard services. More than 1,700 municipal staff were trained to operate the OSSIS. Six offices have been collocated to provide local and central government services together with ADISA, in the municipalities of Belsh, Divjake, Kukes, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe and Maliq.

Public Services: During 2019, the STAR 2 project collected valuable information concerning issues of public service provision models, costs, bottlenecks, process workflows and other factors influencing the efficiency and accessibility of services to citizens. Data elaboration and service evaluation reports were generated for each

37. Belsh, Bulqize, Cerrik, Delvine, Devoll, Divjake, Dropull, Durres, Elbasan, Gramsh, Kamez, Kavaje, Kolonje, Konispol, Kruje, Kukes, Kurbin, Libohove, Librazhd, Lushnje, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq, Mallakaster, Memaliaj, Permet, Pogradec, Polican, Rrogozhine, Shijak, Skrapar, Tepelene, Tropoje and Vore. The year 2019 saw the establishment of Youth Voice platform in five new municipalities—Kruje, Maliq, Pogradec, Shijak and Ure Vajgurore—where Memoranda of Understanding were signed with these municipalities, youth plans developed, including to budgetary requirements, and plans for M&E of youth service delivery are being developed.



▶ NEW LOCAL ARCHIVES IN 61 MUNICIPALITIES IN ALBANIA

municipality, to be consolidated into an aggregated report on municipal service delivery features, findings and recommendations, to be finalised in 2020.

Local Democracy: By 2019, all 61 Albanian municipalities were equipped with web pages, thirteen of which were supported by STAR 2, and are publishing their decisions online, 33 of which were supported by STAR 2. A total of 500 local government officials from all 61 municipalities developed capacities in public engagement and consultation, integrity risk assessment methodology, and standard municipal code of conduct for local governments, endorsed as a standard by the National Coordinator against Corruption. Six municipalities³⁸ piloted the integrity risk assessment methodologies, which were approved by the respective councils.

UNFPA works to improve local governance by empowering youth to put their issues on the table, through

38. Durrës, Elbasan, Gjirokaster, Mallakaster, Mat and Patos.

(i) establishment or expansion of youth networks, national advocacy platform Youth Voice, SRH media platform, Y-Peer network, local partnerships for HIV–AIDS in six municipalities,³⁹ and (ii) development of local plans and budgets addressing young people’s issues (see comprehensive details in output 2.1 and 2.3). These networks and platforms at municipal level have proven to be good advocates and watchdogs to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions and ensure inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, contributing towards achieving SDG 16, targets 16.6, 16.7 and 16.10, indicators 16.6.2, 16.7.2 and 16.10.2.

Challenges

Municipalities show limitations in taking actions towards the implementation of good democratic participatory governance practices without mentorship and

39. Berat, Elbasan, Kukës, Lezhë, Shkodër and Vlorë.

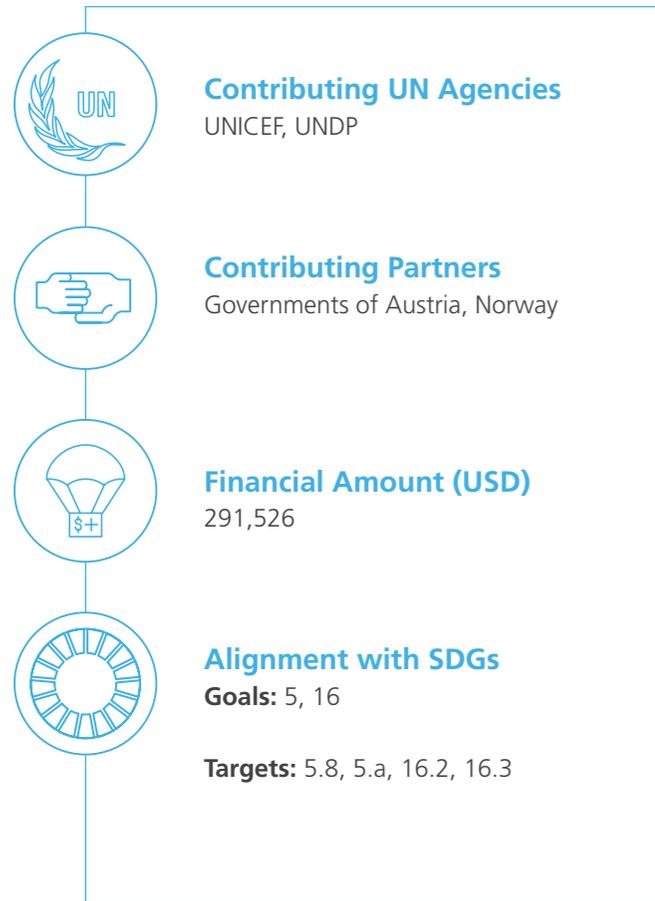
advice from partners, and municipal staff need more time and support to fully absorb the instruments provided and make effective use of them. The implementation of OSSIS has suffered from a lack of IT equipment and computer literacy, despite tailored training and capacity building. A degree of staff resistance to depart from the old traditional paper-based work was also encountered. The leadership of mayors in implementation of change is definitely a game-changer, in most cases, for overcoming technical issues and increasing overall absorption of the assistance provided by partners.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Further consolidation of the results, especially through building upon the achievements of STAR 2, but also with a view to better responding to the Action Plan of the NCSDLG, will be the focus of UNDP for 2020 and beyond in the area of decentralisation and local governance. Functional participatory governance practices, enhanced municipal systems and standards, improved service delivery and overall municipal performance, effectively driven policy development, coordination and monitoring are some of the key priorities for 2020–2021 towards the advancement of the decentralisation agenda.

OUTPUT 1.4 - ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Children and vulnerable adults and groups have equitable access to a friendlier justice system, and juvenile justice is administered to international standards



Implementation Progress

The importance of ensuring equal access to all rights holders as individuals (all men, women, boys and girls) is a priority for Albania. Three key factors contribute to a fragile framework for access to justice in the country: low levels of legal literacy, dubious attitudes to what is just, and a lack of trust in the justice system. The year 2019 witnessed significant advances in shaping a comprehensive normative framework for justice for children. These required substantial support from all partners, especially the UN in Albania, including for the establishment of new institutions such as the Juvenile Criminality Prevention Centre, and Free Legal Aid Directory, among others, appointment and training of specialised professionals, building coordination mechanisms at the central and the local level, investing in data on justice for children, provision of child-friendly justice services at the local level, and strengthening public oversight of justice for children issues.

In 2019, UNICEF’s continued support and advocacy to government to improve the normative justice for children framework, resulted, among others, in the approval of five Decrees of the Council of Ministers, one Prime Minister’s Order and two Ministerial Ordinances (MOs) based on the Criminal Justice for Children Code. Together, these legal instruments help to (i) guarantee procedural rights of children, including the right to be heard; (ii) establish new justice for children institutions; (iii) govern data for children in criminal justice processes; (iv) specify responsible authorities for implementation

of the normative framework; and (v) determine procedures and regulations for returning, and repatriation of, unaccompanied children.

Criminal justice for children improved in practice as well. The High Judicial Council decentralised the court’s review of criminal justice for children cases, for example, requiring every judicial district court to determine at least three judges who specialise in justice for children. Compared to the situation in 2018, when only six district courts were mandated to try criminal cases affecting children, this important change advocated by UNICEF contributes to reducing the length of juvenile pre-trial detention and increasing access to justice for all children. Meanwhile, the Order of Psychologists received support to develop and distribute information to every judicial district court and prosecution office clarifying the role of psychologists in justice processes affecting children. Three pre-trial detention centres for children, where adult separation was not ensured, were shut down so that now juveniles are placed in a juveniles-only facility, also advocated by UNICEF.

Furthermore, in 2019, UNICEF began supporting some tailored services⁴⁰ for children in contact with the law, as well as establishing two police child-friendly interview units. Some 75 probation officers (nationally) were trained in their role for advancing the use of restorative justice for children pursuant to the Criminal Justice for Children Code, and 32 professionals of various disciplines in Berat and Gjirokaster were trained in inter-institutional collaboration for cases of children in contact with the law. In addition, following the requirement of the Justice for Children Strategy, a roadmap for cross-disciplinary case management for justice for children with processes at the local level and a package of regulatory documents for the coordination and monitoring mechanism at the central level were developed

40. Legal, psychological, restorative justice, rehabilitation, parenting and socio-economic reintegration assistance.

by UNICEF. The agency also supported the municipalities of Berat and Gjirokaster in configuring the practical execution of the code and the strategy. The above efforts have ensured a steady decrease of the number of children deprived of liberty, both those convicted with a prison sentence and the unsentenced child detainees, contributing directly to SDG goal 16, target 16.3, and indicator 16.3.2. These interventions also seek to provide the right response to child victims of various forms of violence. While the number of those who experience violence will require persistent efforts to come down, the improved response by the justice system in collaboration with other protection authorities, will ultimately lead to less violence in society.

Efforts have also been made to ensure unaccompanied minors receive the appropriate services from national authorities. UNHCR was actively involved in drafting a DCM approved in March that enhanced coordination of state services in cases of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). UNHCR ensured awareness of non-national UASC at the National Workshop on Unaccompanied Children in mid-April. The National Child Agency in coordination with UNHCR were involved in the return of two UASC to Greece in May.

The Ministry of Justice and the National Agency for Information Society, supported by UNICEF, determined in 2019 the technical requirements, related operational costs, administration and maintenance for the Integrated Data System on Justice for Children following the legal requirements. These officially approved Terms of Reference helped MoJ to include in the Mid-Term Budget Programme (MTBP) all the costs of the system starting from January 2021. Also, establishment of a Centre for Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Criminality, under the auspices of the ministry, is ongoing with the centre’s personnel being recruited based on job descriptions developed with UNICEF support. Capacity development of MoJ staff was supported in 2019 through participation in an international conference on restorative justice in

Tbilisi, combined also with a study visit to the Georgian Juvenile Criminality Prevention Authority and the Probation Service to exchange professional experience and critical reflections. In addition, INSTAT adopted the International Classification of Crimes, supported by UNICEF, as the basis for the collection and processing of justice for children administrative data, disaggregated by age and sex.

The Free Legal Aid (FLA) Law entered into force in mid-2018, and the development and adoption of relevant by-laws during 2018–2019 was crucial to creating adequate fundamentals for a functional free legal system that centres its services around the most vulnerable persons in society. Yet, there is an urgent need for primary and secondary free legal aid services to become available to citizens, especially the most disadvantaged in the country. Also, in view of the legal responsibilities mandated in the FLA law and by-laws, the responsible state structures need support to carry out their functions with regard to administering and overseeing FLA services. In March 2019, pursuant to the FLA law, the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice adopted, with UNDP support, three Decisions of the Council of Ministers (DCMs) and five ministerial orders⁴¹ that create an effective implementation of the FLA law and an enabling environment for vulnerable women and men to access the justice system in an unhindered and equal manner. Two other by-laws are awaiting MoJ approval,

to be finalised in 2020. Responding to the growing demand among the most vulnerable women and men in Albania for legal aid services, UNDP supported expansion of the FLA centres to the district courts of Peshkopi and Shkoder, reaching some 851 vulnerable persons (f, 428; m, 523) by the end of 2019, through free primary and secondary legal aid services, averaging approximately 71 per month for the two centres.⁴² Furthermore, three FLA centres in Durres, Fier and Lezhe began the process of revitalisation by the end of 2019 and are expected to become fully operational during 2020.

Challenges

A key challenge in 2019 was staff turnover and delays in recruitment of local professionals due to, among others, the challenging political situation prior to, during and after the local elections, and the vetting of magistrates as part of the Justice System Reform. To address these challenges, UN agencies invested additional efforts to discuss interventions with the newly appointed professionals, leadership and staff, especially at the local level, to enlist their commitment and develop their capacities in key areas. The agencies successfully advocated with MoJ to ensure appointment of key staff on justice for children and FLA-related issues.

Diversion measures and alternative sanctions, including restorative justice measures for children and their parents, are still under-utilised for most prosecutors and judges who have only recently been assigned to deal with cases of children. To address this situation, UNICEF

has paid particular care to supporting prosecutors and judges, at least in the focal jurisdiction, in building their network with other key stakeholders, such as municipal social services and child protection units (CPUs), regional education directorates, regional employment services, and other public and private service providers.

Participation of CPUs in pre-screening of UASC became more consistent in Gjirokaster in 2019, though it remains a gap in other border areas. Despite some developments in the legal framework, government capacities to implement effective systems for managing UASC cases are still limited, due also in part to a lack of understanding and awareness. Albania lacks a specific protection system for UASC, including provision of appropriate accommodation.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNDP will support the government in adequate FLA law implementation, advancing professional capacities of assigned state structures on provision and monitoring of FLA, and consolidating and scaling up FLA centres, with the aim of ensuring unhindered and equitable access to FLA services for the most vulnerable populations.

UNICEF will support government and the judiciary in implementing the Justice for Children normative framework, particularly in terms of institution building (establishment of a Centre for Juvenile Delinquency Prevention); capacity development (for justice, law enforcement and other professionals involved in justice for children processes, including against trafficking in persons); establishment of electronic information management systems and improvement of administrative data in the area of children's access to justice; and support for local government and local professionals in 2–4 municipalities to mould the functioning of justice for children processes (support establishment of diversion practices,

promote restorative justice, support community-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, promote establishment of a coordinated and inter-disciplinary mechanism to address cases of children in conflict and contact with the law), while documenting them and advocating with Albanian authorities to properly budget for child rights.

ILO in collaboration with its International Training Centre in Turin will support the School of Magistrates to enhance the capacity of future judges dealing with labour litigations in enforcing fundamental labour rights at work.

UNHCR and UNICEF will assist national partners in developing SOPs for identification, referral (including repatriation to Albania) and protection of unaccompanied children in Albania, which inter alia involves the appointment of legal guardians and determination of the best interest of the child.

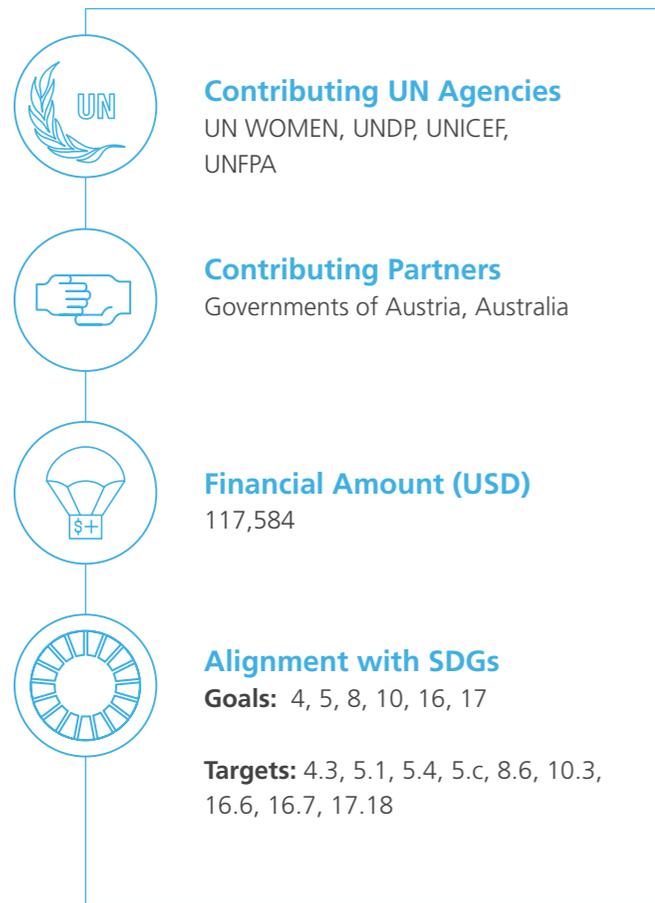
UN Women will support national partners in addressing the obstacles faced by women in owning, controlling and using property through (i) providing a holistic package of interventions aimed at further strengthening the legislative and strategic framework, and (ii) developing the capacities of state institutions tasked with dealing with women's property rights, namely MoJ, the Central and Local Offices of Immoveable Property Registration, notary offices, judges and lawyers. The interventions aim particularly to target vulnerable women, including women survivors of violence, elderly women and women with disabilities, through targeting specific communities and women from those categories. The interventions will include street law activities and provision of information packages on violence against women to shelters and NGOs and service providers. In addition, UN Women will support CSOs to provide free legal aid to survivors of violence in several municipalities in the framework of the regional programme ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

41. DCM no. 110, date 6/03/2019 'On the Procedure and documentation rules for NGO authorisation in offering free legal aid services and benefiting from state budget and funding'; DCM no. 55, date 6/02/2019 'On the Procedure and documentation rules for NGO authorisation in offering free legal aid services and benefiting from state budget and funding'; DCM no. 1, date 6/3/2019 'On changes in DCM no. 4, date 12/12/2012 for 'Remuneration & payment criteria of court experts & witnesses'; Prime Minister Order no. 59, date 25.03.2019 'On approval of the structure and organogram of the Directory of Free Legal Aid'; Ministerial Order (MO) no. 1, date 8/3/2019 'On the rules and procedures for administration of information' (as per FLA law article 7/i rules and procedures for administration of information); MO no. 2, date 25/03/2019 'On the procedure, periodicity and rules on change of circumstances' (article 31/1 Procedure, periodicity & rules on change of circumstances); MO no. 225 date 25/03/2019 'On approval of the model forms for free legal aid services' (as per article 7, 17 and 19 of FLA); MO no. 226 date 25/03/2019 'On approval of the contract models for free legal aid services (as per article 7/e and e; the model contract with not-for-profit organisations for primary legal aid services).

42. 735 beneficiaries (86.4%) received primary legal aid, and 116 persons (13.6%) received secondary legal aid (court representation). The composition of the vulnerable groups benefiting from the FLA service was as follows: 428 persons with low or no income, 96 members of the Roma and Egyptian minorities, 176 pensioners, 45 persons with disabilities, 8 victims of domestic violence and other gender-based abuses, and 98 returned immigrants requiring legal aid for the following types of cases: divorce, protection orders, birth registration, pension benefits, labour disputes, immigration criminal law, social benefits, inheritance cases and property disputes.

OUTPUT 1.5 - MAINSTREAMING GENDER & GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

State institutions have capacities and mechanisms to mainstream gender in policy-making and planning processes



Implementation Progress

The National Strategy on Gender Equality 2016–2020 and the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015–2020 call on actions at the central and local level to mainstream gender into their legislative and policy development initiatives, and for implementation to be equally beneficial to men and women. In line with the public finance reform, the new Albanian Public Finance Management Sectoral Strategy 2019–2022, drafted and endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 18 December 2019, reinforces Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) through the annual budgeting process. The MTBP 2020–2022 is already responsive to men and women’s needs through planning of 7.2 percent budgetary funds to address gender inequality issues in sectors such as health, social protection, education, agriculture. Several social inclusion policies measures reinforced in 2019 have incorporated gender equality explicitly, including a budget increase in pension contributions and a baby bonus policy allocation. Government has committed to continuing financing the establishment of social services for men and women with disabilities, and for all men and women and families in need, in addition to the already available economic aid and disability schemes. Ten (out of 11) line ministries and two institutions (People’s Advocate, and Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination) have included the basic elements of gender equality in their budgetary programmes. For 2020, 38 budgetary programmes (50% of all such programmes)

have already included gender budgeting in their mid-term plans. This is a milestone that contributes directly towards achieving SDG Indicator 5.c.1 - proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment. With UN Women support, Albania has pilot tested the methodology for measuring this SDG indicator and has voluntarily reported for the second year as part of the global SDG reporting, noting that 7.2 percent of the planned 2020 budget will contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment compared to 6.8 percent in 2019.⁴³

Key requirements for successful gender mainstreaming include a strong and stable national gender machinery, an administration with specific gender mainstreaming skills, and an integrated process in all elements of governance, reinforced repeatedly to make it routine. Efforts are made across UN programmes to ensure that the budgeting processes back up gender equality with financial resources. The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) and line ministries have been continuously supported by UN Women in developing capacities to mentor budget users in applying GRB in the MTBP, as well as in conducting gender budget analysis. Following the International Monetary Fund (IMF)’s Mid-term Review of the Public Finance Management Strategy 2020–2022, MoFE requested UN Women assistance in drafting measures to be included in the PFM strategy for further implementation of GRB within the MTBP framework action plan. Financing gender mainstreaming is incorporated across many UN programmes. For example, elev-

en municipalities have developed three-year and fully costed social care plans (see Output 2.3 for details), supported by UNICEF, duly taking into account the diverse and gendered challenges for boys and girls and men and women. UNICEF has also trained relevant municipal staff for mainstreaming gender into these plans.

While noting the budgetary achievements, solid steps have been taken in mainstreaming and strengthening gender equality data and evidence for a socially improved development context in Albania. INSTAT produced, for the first time without UN Women technical support, a 2019 Women and Men publication, in addition to close collaboration and support of UN Women in other areas, and developed and launched in parallel an online platform that provides access to data from this publication. Furthermore, INSTAT was able to reprocess information from available national data sources for compilation of additional disaggregation for SDG indicators, resulting in an increased number of SDG gender-related indicators for Albania in the national 2019 SDG Indicators Report to prepared by INSTAT in 2020.⁴⁴

For the first time, in 2019, oversight institutions became proactive in demanding accountability of public institutions on budget allocations and application of GRB within them. As the People’s Advocate, the Anti-discrimination Commissioner and the High Court of Audit have become more knowledgeable about Gender Equality (GE) and GRB, possessing also basic knowledge on the MTBP cycle and integration of GRB. The Ombudsperson is drafting a report on the costing and budgeting of domestic violence with data from line ministries and five target municipalities, while the High Court of Audit has already conducted a performance-based audit of GRB within the

43. UN Women efforts have directly contributed to measuring and ensuring progress on this indicator by (i) supporting the government efforts to create a fiscal system with gender principles, which enables to track budget allocations through key gender performance indicators; (ii) strengthening the monitoring role of oversight institutions such as the Parliament, the Ombudsman and the Anti-discrimination Commissioner; and (iii) increasing transparency and accountability through specific provisions that make allocations for GEWE publicly available (dedicated publication of Citizen’s Budget; Officially reporting to the Parliament and High Court of Audit on the implementation of GRB-related commitments as part of the National Strategy on Gender Equality).-

44. UN Women supported the process through technical expertise provided through a national consultant who guided the entire process of data reprocessing and links to SDGs.

Gender Equality Strategy for 2018. Thirty members of the Department of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) were enabled to provide information for the performance-based audit thanks to UN Women technical support, training and guidance.

MPs are also playing an increased role in demanding accountability on GRB, with eight MPs and the Parliamentary sub-commission on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence against Women informed on GRB in the MTBP, and have used GE and GRB analysis in the Parliamentary Commission hearings during the 2020 budget discussions, thanks to UN Women support for training and a study visit to the Austrian Parliament.⁴⁵ Following the visit, the sub-committee called a hearing in November 2019 to demand accountability of MoFE and line ministries on application of GRB in the 2020 budget, and to propose to MoFE concrete amendments to the Organic Budget Law (2016) to enhance gender key performance indicators in the budget preparation format. Although the meeting was cancelled as a result of the earthquake disaster in Albania, the amendments were shared with MoFE and are currently pending review. Such initiatives (trainings and study tours) enhance transparency, accountability and participation by legislators in determining the spending priorities in government policies. Positive feedback was received from MPs and an action plan is to follow to elaborate concrete actions the sub-committee will take in 2020 in applying GRB.

The U-Report platform, launched in 2018 by UNICEF,

45. Study visit to Vienna, 24–27 March 2019, by MPs of the Parliamentary sub-commission on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence against Women. The aim of the visit was to gain an understanding of the mechanisms and instruments of GRB that have been successfully implemented in Austria. As a result, sub-commission members are now more familiar and knowledgeable of tools use for analysing public policies, programmes and budgets and monitoring their implementation from a gender perspective, and have some skills to influence decisions and demand for more efficient and equitable resource allocations.

continues to engage adolescent boys and girls in raising issues and discussing solutions affecting their lives, providing them an equal voice and opportunity to influence public policies. Throughout 2019, Albania continued to participate in the Western Balkans U-Report initiative aiming to increase youth civic engagement in issues that concern them and their communities. In 2019, there were 3,015 U-Reporters in Albania, with an almost equal representation of boys and girls in all 61 municipalities in the country. U-Report has completed a total of eight surveys, through UNICEF support: three at the country level, four regional and one global, including one dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, launched on International Women's Day.

Incidentally, the newly approved Youth Law, supported by UNFPA, in close cooperation and partnership with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY), CSOs, Youth Voice and the Youth NGOs network, will open up avenues for empowering young girls and boys equally, addressing inequalities and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable. The Youth Law will make a strong contribution to SDG Goals 4, 5, 8 10 and 16, specifically to achieve indicators 4.3.1, 8.6.1, 10.3.1, 16.6.2, 16.7.2, to mention a few.

Gender equality issues are also mainstreamed in many areas affecting children. UNICEF supported MoESY in (i) conducting a mid-term review of the National Strategy of Pre-University Education, offering a substantial range of recommendations to feed into the development of the new sector strategy and trigger debates on the quality and inclusiveness of the education system, including from the gender equality perspective, and (ii) ensuring effective implementation of new curricula, standards and teaching methodologies, including from a gender equality and



YOUNG U-REPORTERS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE, HEAD OF EU DELEGATION AND THE MAYOR OF TIRANA AFTER DISCUSSION ABOUT THE U-REPORT AS A PLATFORM FOR GIVING BOYS AND GIRLS A VOICE IN PUBLIC DECISIONS.

non-discrimination perspective. Similarly, MoHSP and its subordinate authorities were supported in introducing for the first time elements of gender equality and GBV in the accredited trainings of health care professionals tasked with visiting children in their own home environment.

Challenges

Sectoral gender analysis and evidence are preconditions for effectively mainstreaming the gender perspective in the budgeting process. This perspective requires parallel capacity-building efforts with public officials and gender focal points in institutions to identify sectoral gender gaps in addition to the know-how on GRB in public finance management,

which UN Women intends to follow through in the subsequent phase of the GRB project.

The approach to GRB training needs to focus on increasing programme-based budgeting skills across governments with GRB as an element of the overall approach. UN Women will take into account this lesson in the new phase of the GRB regional project being developed. This phase will focus more on providing public administration with a mixed set of skills, combining gender sectoral analysis and application of GRB in budget programmes where gender gaps are prevalent. The existing module on GRB, endorsed by ASPA, will be updated to reflect these newly identified needs.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

At the central level, UN Women will seek to build upon the positive changes resulting from previous national planning and budgeting interventions and provide targeted assistance in areas where gaps have been identified, including upscaling the proven approaches and good practices for GRB integration at all levels of planning and policy making, and supporting government in translating gender commitments into budget allocations through application of a gender lens to the processes, resources and institutional mechanisms. At the local level, UN Women will emphasise the use of GRB as a tool to enable local governments to recognise the value and potential for local development and inclusive growth by investing in gender-responsive services and gender-inclusive processes. CSO networking and advocacy efforts will be supported to enable structured and continued oversight and analysis of budgetary allocation and spending from a gender perspective, and to generate missing watchdog evidence and expert policy recommendations. Municipalities will be supported in the application of gender and children responsive planning and budgeting of local MTBPs. Furthermore, UN Women will contribute in the implementation of the UN Women flagship programme Making Every Woman and Girl Count in Albania by i) supporting the mainstreaming of gender data by assessing the relevant administrative data sources as primary to informing the gender-responsive planning, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral policies and strategies; ii) improving online data availability of gender-related indicators considering the UN Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, UNECE Gender Equality Indicators and SDGs indicators, the PC-Axis; iii) developing national factsheets and reports on gender equality or status of women considering that 2020 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs; and iv) supporting the development of training

modules on gender statistics to increase the statistical literacy of the various target groups (e.g. pupils, students, media, policy makers), whether by e-Learning or face-to-face.

Following the work conducted previously with the Gender Equality Facility in phase I, UN Women will focus intervention in order to reflect the EU commitment on gender equality as a principle underpinning its external relations within the framework of Albania’s accession to the EU, and with a focus on the upcoming negotiation process. With the overall aim of enhancing transposition of the EU gender equality *acquis* and achieving GE outcomes in line with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs (with a focus on SDG 5), the interventions will focus on strengthening gender and socially responsive governance at central and local levels, in line with international human rights norms and standards such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and the recommendations of the UPR. Intended to complement ongoing programmes on GE and the empowerment of women and girls, the action emanates from implementation of the UN Women Gender Equality Facility, phase I (2016–18).

With the National Strategy on Gender Equality coming to an end in 2020, UN Women will support MoHSP in addressing violence against women issues, with UNICEF duly addressing the GE challenges faced by boys and girls in the new cycle.

OUTPUT 1.6 - MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

Government authorities have strengthened capacities to enhance effective migration and asylum management



Implementation Progress

Migration is a crucial element in Albania’s social and economic development, considering the large proportion (1/3) of Albanian citizens living abroad and the strong dependency on migrant remittances. Albania is also considered a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. To address challenges related to complex migration flows, as well as to enhance the development impact of migration, IOM supported government in (i) implementing the National Strategy on Migration (2019–2022) and its Action Plan, (ii) improving immigration reception capacity for immigrants to ensure proper registration, pre-screening, identification of vulnerability and referral to accommodation and other specialised governmental services, (iii) increasing the legal and technical capacities of the national agencies to introduce Advance Passenger Information systems, and (iv) enhancing engagement with the Albanian diaspora, with specific focus on the communities in Italy. Support for enhancing migration data was also provided to INSTAT for conducting a household migration survey.

More specifically, the support for implementation of the measures of the Migration Strategy Action Plan consisted in carrying out an in-depth assessment of the migration-related functions of relevant institutions, as well as the development of a training module on migration governance for officials. Coupled with the previous IOM support for drafting the National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan, this effort



MIGRANTS HAVING ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES – NEW REGISTRATION AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS IN ALBANIA – KAPSHITICE BORDER POLICE STATION

makes a direct contribution to the achievement of the SDG target 10.7 - facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies – and related indicator 10.7.2.

IOM's contribution to increasing the reception capacities at the border crossings with Greece resulted in the establishment of a fully equipped Centre for Registration and Temporary Accommodation of Migrants, with a capacity of 60 people, in Kapshtica, Korce, in the area of the Border and Migration Police Station. With the aim of increasing the legal and technical capacities of the national agencies to introduce Advance Passenger Information systems, an assessment of the current legal framework and IT infrastructure was completed by IOM in the context of a regional project and handed over to the relevant authorities. INSTAT conducted

a Household Migration Survey (HMS), supported by IOM, of more than 20,000 households and 70,000 interviewees, providing additional insights into migratory movements in Albania. The HMS was combined with Focus Group Discussions and returnee and key informant interviews with local authorities in selected areas to further explore migration, return and reintegration dynamics and challenges.

IOM support to boosting diaspora engagement continued during 2019 with the completion of a diaspora mapping exercise in Belgium, France and Italy that charted the interest and propensity to engage by members of the diaspora with selected professional profiles needed in the Albanian market, as well as potential investors. Under the same action, a fellowship mechanism was established and activated for institutional support from the Embassy and consulates in Italy, as well as in support of the revitalisation of remote cultur-

al sites in Albania and in boosting local development, in cooperation with the University of Florence. These mechanisms contribute to the achievement of SDG target 17.16 - enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources... - and related indicator 17.16.1.

In 2019, arrivals of refugees and migrants increased by 85 percent, to a total of 10,557 persons. Asylum requests increased by 52 percent, totalling 6,677 requests. An increase in the proportion of women, children and families was noted, with roughly a ten-fold increase for each, compared to 2017. Some 70 percent of arrivals and 76 percent of asylum seekers originated from countries with generally high levels of protection. The flow remains transitory in nature. Asylum seekers have access to reception conditions, material assistance, interpretation, psycho-social support and free legal aid through UNHCR partners, although a lack of resources and capacity is a challenge. The legal framework is generally aligned with international standards.

Through UNHCR support, MoI managed effectively mixed movements of refugees and migrants to and through the country during 2019. UNHCR and its partners exceeded targets in relation to border monitoring and assistance to new arrivals. The agency also continued to advocate for strengthened identification and referral of persons with specific needs, using the joint UN Needs Assessment as a basis for advocacy and for securing additional funding. UNHCR funded additional reception capacity in Erseka (30 beds) and refurbishment in Gjirokastra (20 beds), contributing to the achievement of SDG goal 10, target 10.7 and indicator 10.7.2. Through its partner Caritas, 11,245 people were provided with food at border areas, and 2,774 people with non-food items. Some 524 persons received medical services in the national health sys-

tem, 11,949 information leaflets were disseminated, and 7,352 persons were assisted with interpretation during pre-screening. A total of 7,003 individuals were transferred to the National Reception Centre of Asylum Seekers, in Babrru, Tirana, while Caritas conducted 315, and UNHCR conducted 134, border and community monitoring visits. Pre-screening procedures, including implementation of safeguards, were monitored.

Since the deployment of Frontex in May 2019, UNHCR has been participating in monthly operational briefings to new Frontex officers. Their presence has led to enhanced identification of persons with specific needs. The agency and its partners conducted profiling interviews in the border areas, providing information to the arrivals both before and after pre-screening procedures. Quantitative data from these exercises was collated and analysed through Information Management System tools. The proposed piloting of a new approach to border, reception and asylum management along the southern border was discussed on an initial basis with relevant government counterparts and international stakeholders. However, due to Albania's turbulent political and legislative context of 2019, plans for the pilot were ultimately postponed until 2020.

UNHCR welcomed the government's pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 concerning refugees and asylum seekers. The pledges, which effectively set the asylum policy agenda for the coming years, are geared towards: i) the elimination of legal inconsistencies and administrative barriers preventing refugees and asylum seekers from effectively accessing rights, ii) issuance of personal ID numbers and cards to refugees and asylum seekers, facilitating their effective access to the right to personal security and increasing the country's capacity to protect refugees, iii) ensuring that asylum procedures are fair and efficient, and iv) strengthening the quality of asylum decision making.

UNHCR, through TLAS' two legal experts, supported Mol in drafting a new Law on Asylum to ensure compliance with international and European standards. The agency coordinated round-tables with international partners and submitted its comments for incorporation. Amendments to the Law on Social Assistance allowed UNHCR to advocate with the relevant line ministry, MoHSP, for inclusion of asylum seekers in its scope. The agency contributed to the drafting and approval of two DCMs 'On determination of the criteria, documentation and procedures for the approval, refusal, renewal and cancellation of the work permit, Type C,' and 'On some amendments and additions to DCM no. 827, date 11.12.2003, 'On the method of coding and the structure of the identity number of citizens'".

UNHCR, through its partner Refugee and Migrant Services in Albania (RMSA) provided information on asylum procedures and legal counselling to 776 asylum seekers. Formal legal representation was provided to two persons in the first instance and two persons in the second instance. In addition, the agency was present as an observer during Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews conducted by the asylum authorities. In 2019, UNHCR and the Directorate for Asylum and Citizenship (DfAC) embarked upon a Quality Initiative Project, aimed at enhancing the quality of asylum decision making and building capacities.

Special care is needed to address the needs of unaccompanied minors and child migrants. UNICEF has advocated for a more effective response from the child protection system over cases of migrant or asylum-seeking children. Through UNICEF support, the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child was able to deploy a mobile team to monitor and support capacities of Child Protection Workers (CPWs). A total of 29 CPWs have been supported with coaching and mentoring, involving 33 cases of children at risk or in need for protection, including unaccompanied

or separated children. Finally, a more in-depth understanding of barriers to effective protection of children at the local level has emerged from this exercise, which will serve to inform policies and future interventions.

Challenges

While the basis for improved prospects of societal integration has been set, refugees and other persons granted protection still require significant assistance in this area. Services for persons with specific needs are insufficient, and there are limited accommodation facilities for them. A joint UN project under the SDG Acceleration Fund (Norway contribution) will provide consistent integrated referral pathways and training modules for providers of specialised services. Due to a security incident in May 2019, UNHCR and its partners suspended activities at the National Registry of Civil Status, NRCAS, and were unable to monitor conditions. Cases of irregular returns along the southern border are at times reported. Approval of the Law on Asylum is still pending, while viable alternatives to integration are hampered by contradictory laws, by-laws and administrative practices.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

To address challenges related to complex migration flows, as well as enhance the development impact of migration, IOM will support government in (i) implementing the National Strategy on Migration Governance; (ii) strengthening capacities to address both inward and outward migration, in full respect of migrant rights; (iii) improving capacities to ensure proper registration and pre-screening of migrants, identification of vulnerability and referral, including counselling on Assisted Voluntary Return to the country of origin;

and iv) enhancing engagement with the Albanian diaspora, with specific focus on the communities in Italy. Support will be provided to INSTAT to conduct a migration survey. Efforts to raise awareness of irregular migration and the risks associated with it and promote regular migration will continue.

UNHCR will support improvement of the border management system, ensuring access to territory and asylum to asylum seekers, through the introduction of differentiated accommodation arrangements and specialised services tailored to the profile of the arrivals, including increased reception capacity in border areas. UNHCR will support implementation of the pledges made by government at the Global Refugee Forum

in December 2019, notably to foster prospects of integration. Under the Norwegian contribution, UNCT will jointly build upon the findings of the assessment and strengthen capacities in managing mixed migration flows by addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.

UNHCR, in coordination with UNICEF and other UNCT members, will work with MoHSP, the Agency for Child Protection, and Mol to ensure that the needs of women and children at risk are adequately addressed. This will be achieved through dedicated on-the-job capacity building and technical support to child protection service providers in the strategic border adjacent countries (Gjirokaster and Korce).

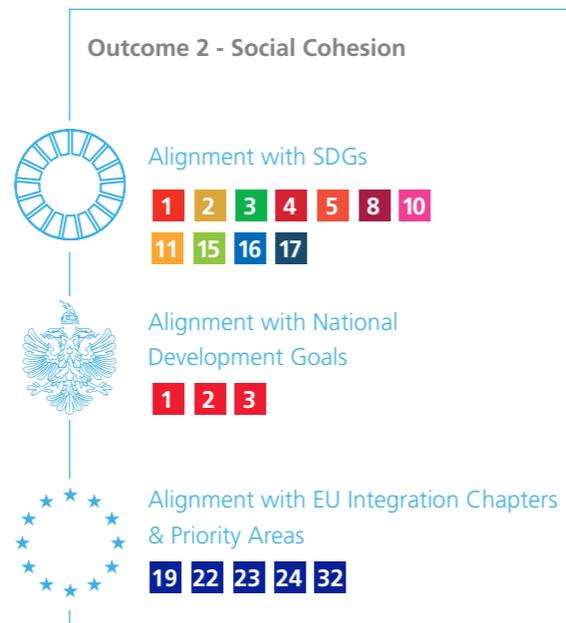
OUTCOME 2 Social Cohesion

All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights, while more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion.

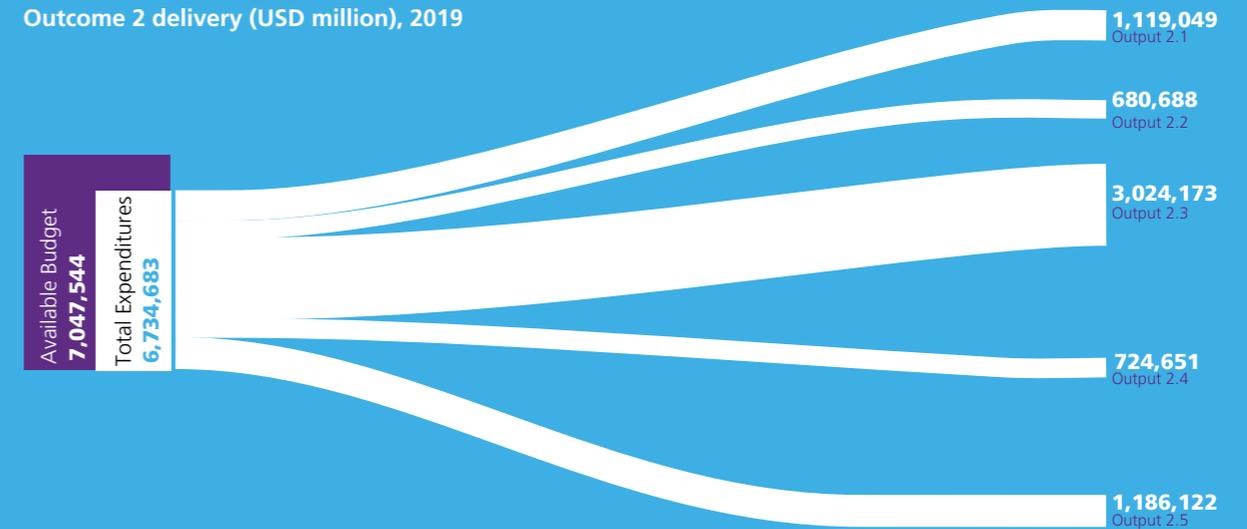
Outcome 2—Social Cohesion—consists of five outputs focusing on: 1) Health, 2) Education, 3) Social Inclusion and Protection, 4) Child Protection, and 5) Gender-Based Violence.

This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving three priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Consolidating good governance, democracy, and the rule of law, and 3) Investing in people and social cohesion. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 19, 23, 24 and 32.

The total available budget for implementation of Outcome 2 in 2019 was USD 7 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Albania, Australia, Austria, Germany, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as the EU, Gilead Sciences Inc., Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, Intesa Sanpaolo Bank of Albania, Peacebuilding Fund, and UN regional and global funds. The outcome delivery was 96 percent.



Outcome 2 delivery (USD million), 2019



Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that out of 27 targets, **27 (93%) are on track, one (3%) is partially on track, and one (3%) has not progressed.**

For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2019
Schoolchildren's learning outcomes (as measured by PISA)	Reading 394 Math 394 Science 397	Reading 405 Math 437 Science 417
Number of sector-specific policies with explicit social inclusion targets	4	21
% Women who have experienced physical violence during their lives	23.7%	18%
Presence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in all schools at all levels, private and public including 10-18 years of age	20%	50%
No. of schools and children reached with Trafficking in human beings' prevention and education interventions	1200	2100
The number of Roma and Egyptian women and men with improved access to basic social protection services is increased.	357 R/E	Over 2,000 R/E
No. of instruments facilitating implementation of legal framework for Child Protection is in place	0	
% of Child Protection Units that perform case management of children at risk and need for protection	26%	79%
No. Municipalities with functional CRMs	27	49
No of cases of gender based violence addressed through CRMs	312	637

OUTPUT 2.1 - HEALTH

There is increased access to quality, inclusive, equitable and affordable health-care services, and community demand is increased

Contributing UN Agencies
UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, IAEA, FAO, IOM

Contributing Partners
Governments of Albania, Austria, Germany, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, United States, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Gilead Sciences Inc., UN regional/global funds

Financial Amount (USD)
1,119,049

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17
Targets: 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c, 3.d, 5.6, 8.2, 11.6, 16.5, 17.18

Implementation progress

The government is engaged in improving the health of Albanians through the approach of Universal Health Coverage. Public health expenditure is still at three percent of GDP and ten percent of the national budget. Disparities and inequalities persist among some groups of the population. The report *Can people afford to pay for health care? New evidence on financial protection in Europe* (WHO Europe 2019) examined the impact of out-of-pocket costs of health care upon access to health services, unmet need and financial hardship for individuals and families in 24 countries, including Albania. The report concluded that where financial protection is relatively weak, catastrophic spending is mainly driven by out-of-pocket payments for outpatient medicines, underpinning the importance of programmes such as the outpatient reimbursed medicines list (ORML) in Albania for providing access to affordable medicines. Another challenge is outward migration of Albanian health-care workers, while insufficient trust towards publicly provided health-care services remains an issue.

According to the 2018 Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality, infant and under-five mortality in Albania were eight and nine per 1,000 live births, respectively, each of which is higher than those for other countries in Europe. Infant and child mortality rates in the under-served areas of mountainous Albania are higher than the national average. Rates of ante- and postnatal care are high, while maternal mortality is still of concern

(WHO–UNICEF–UNFPA estimates 2019), though it has been steadily decreasing over the last two decades.

Although national immunisation coverage remains at satisfactory levels (>97%), MMR 1 coverage rates have dropped to 94 percent (WHO–UNICEF Joint Reporting 2019). Stronger focus is required in addressing an emerging vaccine hesitancy, especially in the light of the measles outbreak of 2018–2019. In August 2019, the European Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination determined that Albania had lost its measles elimination status. Meanwhile, Albania introduced the rotavirus vaccine that year.

In Albania, more than 94 percent of all deaths, and about 85 percent of the overall disease burden, are caused by Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) (Global Burden of Disease Study 2019). Over the last decade, the overall number of NCD cases recorded at the primary health care level in Albania has increased by 56 percent, from about 18,000 in 2008 to more than 28,000 in 2018. The primary care screening programme (Preventive Check Up for citizens of age 35–70 years), established in 2015, has helped in the early detection of NCDs.

After cardiovascular disease, cancer is the leading cause of death (16.6%) in Albania. About 7,000 new cancer cases are reported every year, and more than half of those patients will need radiotherapy as part of their treatment. The Mother Theresa University Hospital in Tirana is the only public medical centre providing radiotherapy. With a population of 2.8 million, the country currently has six high-energy radiotherapy machines (one cobalt-60 teletherapy machine and five LINACs). However, there is still a long waiting list of patients, calling for an increased number of radiotherapy treatment machines. In 2019, a cervical cancer screening programme based on HPV testing was established in the Primary Health Care (PHC) system. Efforts to be

made include strengthening of the referral system, quality assurance of the programme and expansion of the target age group covered by the programme. However, breast cancer screening is fragmented, and mostly opportunistic, though colorectal screening is part of the National Preventive Check Up Programme.

In 2019, there was an increased focus by government, supported by UN agencies, towards people-centred primary health care, integrating health and social care at the community level, and raising investment in the infrastructure of health facilities. To address needs, the health system framework was strengthened through the development for the first time in Albania of a Primary Health Care Strategy 2020–2025 (draft), revision of PHC standards and the methodology for development of a list of reimbursed medicines, as well as review of the capacities of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) in the country, all supported by WHO. In 2019, FAO produced a report on a 2017–2018 survey *Nutritional status and nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and practices among school-aged children in Albania*, which aimed to support improvement of national school nutrition programmes.

The HIV & TB response framework advanced, supported by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA, through (i) the development of a National Action Plan for Control of HIV and TB 2020–2025, an HIV treatment protocol and TB and HIV care guidelines (7 guidelines) and training of trainers (ToT), (ii) piloting of integration of TB care in PHC (1st phase), (iii) development of technical assistance and training in management of TB medicines and diagnostics (2 ToT), (iv) assessment of TB laboratory services, (v) strengthening of the Procurement Service Management (PSM) system for health commodities related to HIV–AIDS and TB, expected to contribute towards optimisation of quantification and forecasting for improved availability of health commodities related to anti-retroviral treatment (ART), (vi) development of a manual on a pre- and post-release plan for young drug

users in prison settings, (vii) preparation of a study on size estimation of the national and regional levels of key populations and increasing the programmatic and operational capacities of CSOs working with the most vulnerable and young key populations to be stronger advocates, focusing on SRH and rights, and (viii) improving capacities of health-care providers through ToT in LGBTI communities with focus on health, SRH and health response to GBV-related issues, in which 24 health-care providers were trained in Tirana as part of the activities envisaged under the strategic document and action plan for LGBTI in Albania.⁴⁶ All efforts drive progress towards achieving a number of SDGs, such as SDG 3, 4, 5, 10 and 16. However, the relation is closer with SDG 3, more specifically targets 3.3 and 3.8 and indicators 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

To strengthen the immunisation response in the country, WHO conducted a Polio Outbreak Simulation Exercise (POSE) in Albania, prepared a study on Measles Virus Transmission Characteristics in Measles Outbreaks with a High Proportion of Adult Cases, a situation analysis of the measles outbreak 2018, and conducted a flu-awareness campaign during 21–25 October. Also in 2019, UNICEF continued to provide procurement services to government for childhood vaccines, and an influenza vaccine supported by the UNICEF supply division in Copenhagen.

Concerning Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), WHO supported (i) establishment of a National Anti-microbial Susceptibility Testing Committee, responsible for keeping updated breakpoints (in EUCAST) and the

development of an online platform for the testing committee, (ii) convening of an Albanian CAESAR Network, (iii) a study on the use of antibiotics in hospitals (Point of Prevalence Survey), and (iv) the Institute of Public Health (IPH) and University of Medicine in conducting a campaign on AMR (November 2019).

Regarding neglected communicable diseases, WHO supported the development of an Albanian Leishmaniasis Action Plan 2020–2022 and guidelines for the surveillance of the disease, as well as guidelines for case management of Visceral and Cutaneous Leishmaniasis. It also strengthened capacities of the IPH Leishmaniasis Reference Laboratory and procurement of laboratory equipment and materials for standard functioning, and for conducting a study on the seroprevalence of the disease in the Albanian population, as well as operationalisation of its surveillance (pilot), and ToT for the above.

With regard to NCDs, WHO supported the training of a core team of five experts for developing an evidence-based policy brief on salt consumption reduction in Albania. On 26 June, 2019 the Council of Ministers approved a revised Universal Salt Iodisation Law, with the draft law submitted to Parliament for approval. Technical support was provided by UNICEF during the discussions in the parliamentary commissions to ensure successful universal salt iodisation and a higher level of protection for Albanian children from iodine deficiency disorders. WHO also advocated for healthy nutrition of children with Parliament and in the media, while UNICEF's support to the MoHSP, IPH and the National Operator of Health Services resulted in preparation of the first National Report on Child Nutrition, offering real-time and disaggregated data for evidence-based policy action. Meanwhile, the child nutrition monitoring system, established through multi-year UNICEF support, was consolidated through strengthening the quality assurance mechanisms for data collection and analysis and realising complete

digitalisation from the service point (health centre) to the national level (IPH). A total of 344 health personnel benefited from capacity development activities that contributed towards improved reporting rates and better quality data for child growth and infant and young child feeding practices in 2019. Also, WHO provided technical assistance to Parliament for legal amendments on the control of novel tobacco products ('vaping') and strengthened capacities of 86 health inspectorates for control of such products.

With regard to cancer screening, WHO technical support provided to MoHSP resulted in the establishment of a Pilot Cervical Cancer Screening Programme and evaluation of progress made by December 2019. From February to June, through UNFPA support, 538 health professionals from around 400 health centres across the country were trained in implementation of the screening programme and as of 1 December 2019, some 13,900 test kits had been distributed to health centres, and more than 12,300 samples collected.⁴⁷ To mark Pink October, support was provided for MoHSP to also carry out awareness-raising activities on breast cancer throughout the month. During the year, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supported Mother Theresa University Hospital with several fellowships, scientific visits and expert missions in the area of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine, as well as with provision of a range of equipment⁴⁸ for the hospital, and also for the Nuclear Medicine Department at Shefqet Ndroqi University Hospital, with ongoing biweekly delivery of radioisotopes and cold kits for nuclear medicine.

Regarding sexual and reproductive health, WHO sup-

ported the consultation and publication of an assessment of sexual, reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent (SRMNCA) health services in the context of universal health coverage. UNFPA supported (i) revitalisation of the National Reproductive Health Committee and the organisation of two meetings held during the 3rd quarter of 2019;⁴⁹ (ii) strengthening of the capacities of logistics management information system specialists and PHC providers for forecasting and monitoring RH commodities, with five meetings and trainings held in Elbasan, Shkoder, Tirane and Vlore; (iii) strengthening of the community health model, with expansion in the districts of Malesi e Madhe and Puke (with 53 awareness sessions held in Malesi e Madhe involving 636 community members, and 30 such sessions in Puke involving 750 community members, including 151 youths of age 14–18 years, from urban and rural areas); (iv) expansion of the community model in the 4th quarter, in the remote areas of Berat, Devoll, Elbasan, Gramsh, Korce, Kucove, Librazhd, Pogradec, Polican, Puka, Malesi e Madhe, Skrapar and Ura Vajgurore; and (v) strengthening of the capacities of health mediators for the Roma and Egyptian community in Berat, Elbasan and Korce, reaching 335 activists from the community through learning sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and identifying 86 health mediators in this group aiming to intensify the work in the field for this vulnerable and marginalised community. All initiatives contribute towards achieving SDG targets 3.7 and 5.6, indicators 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 5.6.1 and 5.6.2

UNICEF engaged in capacity development of health care workers employing a holistic approach to child care, and in preparation of standardised tools for service delivery and development of mechanisms for inter-sectoral collaboration. Some 180 health-care workers from four regions (Elbasan, Korce, Tirane and

46. Deliverables (i)–(iv) are supported by WHO, and (v) by UNICEF as part of its technical assistance in implementation of Global Fund programme activities. The assessments of the HIV–AIDS and TB laboratories accompanied by a budgeted action plan, analysis of the procurement system and SOPs for quantification, forecasting, inventory management and quality assurance of medicaments are expected to contribute towards optimisation of quantification and forecasting for improved availability of health commodities related to antiretroviral therapy (ART). In 2019, UNICEF continued to provide procurement services to the government for antiretrovirals (ARVs), supported by UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen (UNICEF). Deliverables (vi)–(viii) are supported by UNFPA.

47. Of the samples tested, 6.1 percent were positive for high-risk HPV (HR–HPV). During December 2019, additional screening test kits were distributed to health centres according to the needs.

48. Paediatric immobilisation equipment for children undergoing treatment or the initiation of procurement focusing on upgrading one of the two LINACs at Mother Theresa University Hospital to an advanced treatment technique (Volumetric-modulated arc therapy, VMAT), estimated to be finalised in May 2020.

49. Re-establishment of this committee through Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection dated September 24, 2019. All key stakeholders are represented on this committee.

Vlore) have acquired knowledge and skills for implementing universal progressive home visits. Elements of child development, disabilities, child protection and gender issues were introduced for the first time in accredited trainings for health care professionals. Mechanisms for inter-sectoral collaboration were developed in these regions following consultations with health, social care, child protection and local government representatives.

With regard to mental health, WHO conducted policy dialogue on suicide, prevention and public health implications and finalised an assessment of the challenges and needs of PHC providers in meeting the requirement of Albania's mental health legislation. Environmental health benefited from WHO's piloting of water safety plans in small water utilities (in Petrele, Tirane) and technical support provided to Albanian institutions in meeting the obligations of the water protocol.

The health sector emergency preparedness and response situation has been strengthened through WHO support for the (1) development of a Roadmap for the National Action Plan of Health Security; (2) completion of an Albanian Strategic Risk Assessment, with the main outcomes of development of a Public Health Risk Profile, Register of Risks, and a Workplan for emergency preparedness actions; (3) preparation of MoHSP's National Emergency Operation Plan and the Emergency Operation Plan of Department of Infectious Diseases at Mother Theresa University Hospital; (4) assessment of IPH laboratories with regard to high threat pathogens; and (5) capacity development benefiting more than 160 Albanian health professionals from various areas and sectors through the following: a) WHO–EURO regional training workshop on the Use of the Assessment Tool for Core Capacity Requirements at Designated Airports, Ports and Ground Crossings, b) Tabletop Exercise on Flash Floods Scenario, c) Orientation Workshop for the Development of

Health Sector Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, d) Orientation Workshop and Development of an Emergency Operation Plan for the Infectious Disease Hospital, and e) Workshop on Rapid Risk Assessment of Acute Public Health Events. In addition, through UNFPA support, the national response to addressing SRH issues in emergency situations (Minimum Initial Service Package, MISP, implementation) was strengthened through trainings on the development of clinical guidelines conducted in the counties of Elbasan and Shkoder benefiting 65 medical professionals.

Meanwhile, regarding the emergency response to the earthquake of 26 November, WHO supported MoHSP and IPH for (i) mapping the relevant actors working in the health sector and coordinating the response and recovery of the health sector, (ii) conducting a needs assessment for the emergency medical team field hospital to ensure continuity of health services, (iii) procuring emergency medical devices to equip three ambulances, (iv) conducting a public communication on risks and resource mobilisation, (v) ensuring the early warning and surveillance system is fully functional among the displaced population, including monitoring of water quality and hygiene conditions, and (vi) preparing a post-disaster needs assessment report (PDNA).

Health advocacy was central in 2019 efforts of WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA to engage in raising awareness of and advocacy for World Health Day, World TB Day, No Tobacco Day, Blood Donation Day, Hepatitis Awareness Day, European Immunisation Week, Antimicrobials Awareness Week, Flu Awareness Week, national forums on Child Health and Nutrition, and Health Screening at Primary Care and on NCDs.

Challenges

There are several challenges to building a comprehensive health system in Albania that delivers equitable,

efficient, accessible and affordable services for all, including: i) lack of implementation tools for all policies and concrete models for effective inter-sectoral collaboration, ii) need for supervision and follow-up on capacity development interventions to adapt to institutional change and ensure sustainability, iii) weak government capacities to deal with financial management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies, as well as adequate budget allocations for the marginalised; and iv) obligations for the government to pay VAT on imported donations remaining a challenge, often delaying project implementation.

There is a difference between Albania's upper-middle income status and the country's actual needs for support in specific areas that lag behind the SDGs and other important international targets. Financing of health care should be significantly increased (at least doubled) if it is to come in line with EU practice, and requires a serious plan to forecast the scaling up of investment.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

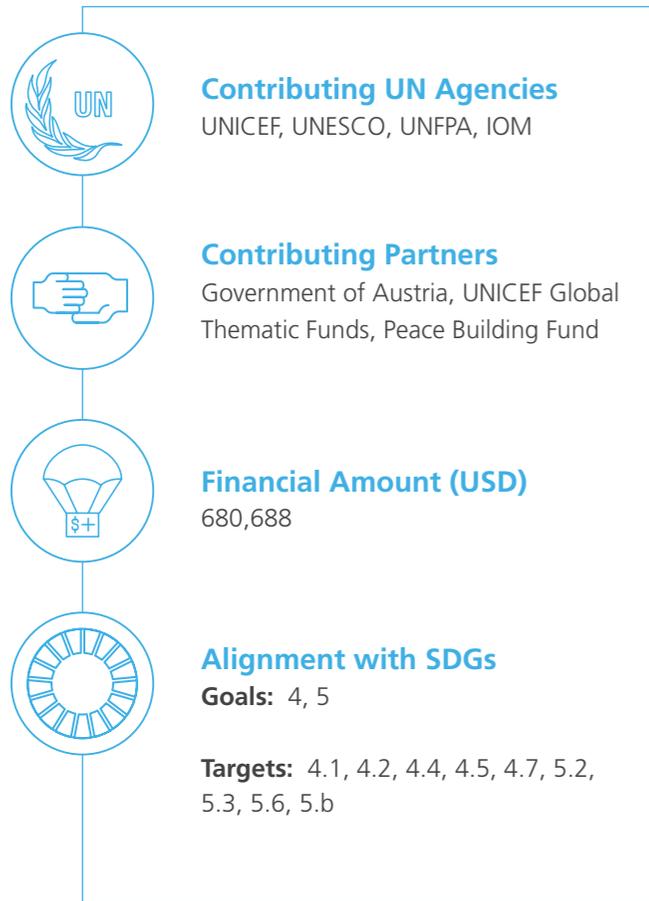
Following the outbreak of COVID-19, all UN agencies in Albania will support the government to implement the COVID-19 Country Action Plan. UN agencies will engage in comprehensive public awareness and information campaigns specifically tailored for target groups and aiming to inform, engage and educate the public on preventive measures against infection from COVID-19, as well as messages in support of the measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

Priority interventions, also in support of COVID-19 response, of UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, IAEA) will include: (i) health system strengthening with focus on financing, equitable access to services,

integration of health and social care at the community level, strengthened reproductive, mother and child health care, including home visiting, enforcement mechanisms and compliance in the use of health-care protocols at all levels; (ii) perinatal care, with its assessment, identification of critical gaps and implementation of priority interventions, and development of an immunisation strategic plan, addressing the issues of vaccine hesitancy; (iii) food and nutrition, with school nutrition, health promotion and education, piloting of the provision of meals to school children, baby-friendly hospitals, and implementation of the Iodine Deficiency Prevention policy; (iv) scaling up and ensuring sustainability of the national response to HIV–AIDS and TB, with implementation of the strategic action plans on the control of HIV and TB; (v) mental health, with community-based services for people with mental health disorders; (vi) improvement of the screening, prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, of tobacco control, air quality, continued human resource capacity building, upgrading and improving utilisation of existing medical equipment and introduction of newer and more sophisticated therapy and diagnostic techniques; (vii) strengthening of emergency preparedness and response and capacity development required under the 2005 International Health Regulations, with development and implementation of the National Health Security Action Plan, updating and development of pandemic and epidemic-prone diseases contingency plans, with particular focus on influenza, delivering SRH services in humanitarian crises and emergencies; and (viii) health information, with technical support for better generation, collection and processing of health data, better use of M&E frameworks, dissemination and support for in-depth analysis of the Demographic and Health Survey 2018.

OUTPUT 2.2 - EDUCATION

Education policies, mechanisms, community partnerships and actions are strengthened for quality inclusive education



Implementation progress

Albania has made significant progress towards consolidating the democracy and open market economy in a country that has evolved from one of the poorest in Europe into an increasingly competitive, upper-middle income economy. While public spending on education remains low, at 3.2 percent of GDP and 10.4 percent of total public expenditures, and remaining below internationally agreed benchmarks,⁵⁰ the country has made improvements in access to education and learning outcomes, rising from one of the weakest performers in the Western Balkans to one of the fastest improvers. Recent reforms contributing to such developments include development of a competency-based curriculum framework, reforms for teacher training and employment, and system governance improvements. Most recently, Albania has restructured key agencies responsible for school support and external evaluation in an effort to further de-concentrate central functions and improve service delivery.

The in-depth sector reforms have contributed to improvement across key education indicators. Access to primary education has expanded in recent years, though lower and upper secondary education net enrolment rates remain low compared to the OECD and the EU, as well as to some countries in the

50. Following the adopted Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, the internationally agreed target for public expenditure on education is at least 4–6 percent of GDP or at least 15–20 percent of total public expenditure.



TESTIMONIALS OF CHILDREN ON DROP OUT PREVENTION

region.⁵¹ Students learning outcomes are gradually improving in Maths while further improvements are needed in Reading and, especially, in Science given the PISA 2018 results.⁵² Those results also show that the average three-year trend in mean scores in all three PISA subjects is positive, resulting in narrowing of the performance gaps among the top and lower achievers. Albania recently raised the bar for entry to the Faculties preparing teachers as a prerequisite for

improving education quality.⁵³ Efforts were also made in 2019 to improve the quality of these programmes. Setting up professional learning networks within each municipality in the country for continuous professional development has also constituted a welcome step for teacher learning and sharing of experiences. MoESY has also undertaken reforms to close small and underperforming schools with fewer than 50 children, decreasing the number of students learning in multi-grade classes, from 33,000 to 22,000 pupils.

However, disparities in opportunity and outcomes persist across population groups. Albania still faces issues of equity in education, drop-out challenges and a need to improve the learning outcomes with a focus on science, literacy and transferrable skills needed for work and life. UNESCO's comparative analysis,

51. Total enrolment in Albania for the academic year 2016–2017 was 86.8 (f, 86.6; m, 87.1; ISCED 2) and for the academic year 2018–2019, 87.7 (f, 86.5; m, 88.8; INSTAT).

52. For reading literacy, the main topic of PISA 2018, 15-year-olds in Albania scored 405 points compared to the average of 487 points in OECD countries; girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 38 points (OECD average: 30 points higher for girls). On average, 15-year-olds scored 437 points in mathematics compared to an average of 489 points in OECD countries; girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 5 points (OECD average: 5 points higher for boys). The average performance in science of 15-year-olds from Albania was 417 points, compared to an average of 489 points in OECD countries; girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 16 points (OECD average: 2 points higher for girls).

53. Entrance to universities preparing teachers is now only possible for students who have reached an average score of 7.5 or above in high school.

prepared on May 2019, on The Intersection of Gender Equality and Education in South-East Europe—A Regional Situation Analysis of the Nexus between SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality)⁵⁴ confirms the continuing improvement of many education indicators in the country, but highlights the disparities between the levels of instruction, and also when compared with those in neighbouring countries. Addressing such educational challenges is crucial for improving Albania's economic development and competitiveness as the country looks toward joining the EU and achieving SDG 4 concurrently, and specific indicators related to gender in pre-primary, basic, and tertiary education. For example, indicator 4.1.1 calls for information on the proportion of students at various levels achieving minimum proficiency in math and reading by gender to reach target 4.1 on ensuring the completion of free, equitable, and quality education for boys and girls; indicator 4.6.1 calls for data on the proportion of a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills by gender; indicator 4.a.1 aims to monitor the percentage of schools with access to, among other conditions, single-sex basic sanitation facilities. Although not all indicators and targets specifically call for disaggregation by gender, some that do not can nonetheless clearly be linked with gender equality. For example, indicators 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 on completion rate and out-of-school rate can provide useful insight into gender equality. This report thus focused not only on those indicators that explicitly called for data by gender but also on other information related to education and gender equality. Additionally, SDG5 on gender equality includes targets and indicators specifically related to the role that education can play in reducing gender inequalities, including targets 5.2 and 5.b and indicators 5.3.1 and 5.6.2.

UN agencies continue to support MoESY to reduce disparities and promote a more inclusive, equitable and quality education system. To advance evidence-based policy making and advocacy, UNICEF supported MoESY with two exercises: an OECD–UNICEF review of the assessment and evaluation system, and a mid-term review of the National Strategy of Education.⁵⁵ Recommendations will assist development of the new sector strategy and hopefully trigger debate on quality and inclusiveness. UNICEF also provided technical assistance and evidence-based advocacy on financing for inclusive education, resulting in a national policy supporting financially children at risk of dropping out of school, and out-of-school children, approved by DCM no. 666.⁵⁶

Improving equitable learning and mainstreaming inclusive school practices were at the core of UNICEF efforts in 2019 in the education sector. For professional development, 200 teachers were trained in inclusive school practices and a training curriculum developed to set up a core professional network of assistant teachers. These teachers conducted trainings to an additional 500 assistant teachers during the year. Thus, a clearer understanding is in place of the assistant teacher profile through development of a new guideline for assistant teachers (approved by MoESY order no. 26 date 25.11.2019) detailing selection criteria, academic requirements, duties and responsibilities for a collaborative and inclusive assistant teacher. Meanwhile, an Early Warning System for Dropout prevention was developed, with 1,200 teachers trained to prevent and address the risk of dropping out of school. A total of 51 teacher professional development networks have been set up by UNICEF in Albania serving discussions and the sharing of challenges and ways they can be overcome or addressed. Also, an end-of-line

assessment of school interventions⁵⁷ was developed showing improvement of the situation of students at risk of school dropout in three main areas: school performance, behaviours and school attendance. The C4D strategy#myschool is a safe⁵⁸ place is playing a crucial role in changing the attitudes of schools and communities towards violence in school. Under the motto “Be safe, be Respectful, be Responsible” 500 teachers, 1,200 students and 1,000 parents have been reached through various training and awareness-raising activities. Meanwhile, qualitative pre-school education for children with disabilities was provided, with a professional development programme developed for teachers promoting an inclusive and stimulating environment for children, focusing on respect and promotion of diversity and social inclusion. Finally, a pre-school assessment framework and a curriculum for the pre-primary year, whose development was supported by UNICEF, were approved in 2019 by MoESY and have a national reach.

UNICEF's efforts towards improving the access and quality of preschool education in Albania, through development of standards, curricula, teacher training and assessments, contributes to SDG 4, target 4.2, indicators 4.2.1, 4.2.3, 4.2.4, and 4.2.5. In addition, UNICEF is also contributing to target 4.1, indicator 4.1.1 through efforts aimed towards improving policies, increasing the capacities of workforce in inclusive education, identifying out of school children and reducing school dropout. The SDG indicator 4.1.1 “the proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex” has marked progress. For example, enrolment rates at the primary level are trending upward since 2009 (UIS,

2020[1]) comparable to the enrolment rates in OECD countries⁵⁹.

Following the November earthquake in Albania, during the rapid response phase, UNICEF provided temporary learning spaces for 400 children affected by the earthquake in Durres, and led the education sector inputs in the PDNA, the main reference document for the international donors conference (February 2020), and which proved crucial in obtaining EUR 1.08 billion of international support to Albania's earthquake recovery efforts. Meanwhile, UNICEF has prioritised advocacy for the inclusion of DRR practices in schools, with a methodology on DRR developed by UNICEF and approved in 2019. Twenty schools in Albania increased DRR capacities through teachers and school personal custom trainings, while DRR commissions in schools are set up and school plans for emergency preparedness are ready, all serving as preparatory work and good practices for mainstreaming of DRR as part of MoESY's post-emergency recovery plans.

UNFPA efforts in Comprehensive Sexuality Education continued, scaling the results achieved in the newly included municipalities of Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokaster, Korce, Tirane and Vlore, and reaching 35 percent of students and 50 percent of teachers through information, training, and monitoring. UNFPA expanded the Y-Peer network to reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalised young people with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights in four municipalities: Cerrik, Korce, Pogradec and Ure Vajgurore. UNFPA trained 50 young people as peer educators and reached more than 20,000 people through social media. In addition, a regional conference organised on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of ICPD (What's Changed since ICPD '94: Regional Conference on Comprehensive Sexuality Education

54. <https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/190271eng.pdf>

55. <https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2031/file/Education%20Sector%20Appraisal%20Document%20Eng.pdf>

56. DCM no. 666 <http://arsimi.gov.al/buxheti-dhe-financat/>

57. <https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org.albania/files/2019-10/Documentation%20ASSA%20lessons%20learnt.pdf>

58. <http://3i.al/>

59. Net enrolment rate in primary education in Albania in 2017 (96%), comparable to that of OECD countries on average (96%) and the EU (96%)



THE YOUTH VOICE PLATFORM, THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH) MEDIA PLATFORM AND Y-PEER NETWORK WERE EXPANDED IN 15 MUNICIPALITIES

and CSE Champions—Albania and beyond) helped increase the collaboration and synergies with government and development partners, celebrating successes and generating commitments for the next 15 years in line with ICPD and SDG target achievement.

A meaningful and important achievement in the education sector in 2019 was a strengthened partnership between UN Albania and RYCO as part of an inter-agency and multi-country project launched in 2018. Key results in 2019 include the development of a mapping of the best education peacebuilding experiences in the region, as well as a teacher training curriculum on peacebuilding in secondary education, both supported by UNICEF. In 2019, UNFPA was nominated as a member of the RYCO Advisory Board, contributing towards youth empowerment and exchanges in the area of peacebuilding, peacekeeping and reconciliation in the six Western Balkan Countries.

Challenges

The education system faced two major challenges in 2019: student protests demanding a more equal and quality higher education, and the November earthquake. The latter required an immediate response that called on extraordinary efforts in terms of human resources response (in numbers, efforts and time) and cost, depleting an already meagre education sector budget. UN agencies are supporting MoESY in addressing sectoral challenges and continuously advocating for increased and equitable budgets for all levels of education.

Persistent data gaps for SDG 4 indicators remain, enhancing the need for increased capacity development of staff in the education sector at INSTAT for data gathering. This becomes particularly necessary in view of preparations for a new National Education Strategy.

UN agencies have worked at different levels in improving data gaps and systems, work that should continue during 2020 and beyond.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Guided by SDG 4, UN agencies UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA and ILO will support MoESY in translating the strategic direction of the Pre-University Education Development Strategy 2014–2020 and NSDI 2015–2020 into concrete measures for ensuring a quality education system for every child, with inclusion and equity, increased access to education, improved quality of education provision, and strengthening of the education sector governance. These collective efforts will feed into the development of a new education sector strategy and enable a closer alignment of the next sector strategy with SDG 4: Education 2030.

Albania will be a part of UNESCO's sub-regional activities on SDG 4 concerning comparative research studies and capacity development. UNICEF interventions will aim at strengthening inclusive education practices in schools, guided by the vision of a transformed education system that responds to a diversity of learners (including boys and girls with disabilities) by enhancing quality education. This approach will be embedded in a framework for inclusive education in line with General Comment Number 4, Article 24 on inclusive education of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF will also support: (i) improvement of systems at national and local levels for identification and integration of out-of-school children and reducing drop-out of boys and girls in four counties in Albania (School as Community Centre initiative), and implementation of a child-driven scheme for professional development with a focus on inclusive pre-school education and development of inspection tools for pre-school; (ii) teacher training and communication

for behaviour change for a non-violent school (Zero violence initiative), and addressing of issues of violent extremism in schools; (iii) adolescents and second decade learning through promotion of intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and RYCO, and piloting of the use of technology and innovation as a means of improving learning outcomes, and expanded access to learning; (iv) development of the new National Strategy of Education 2021–2026; and (v) development of tools for psycho-social support and expansion of DRR in schools.

UNFPA will continue to focus on increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education aiming to have it introduced in 80 percent of schools within 2021. Support will be provided for (a) completing teacher standards on CSE; b) expanding CSE in all local offices for pre-university education (ZVAP) including awareness for out-of-school youth through a Y-Peer approach; c) advocating for CSE to be included in the curriculum of VET schools and teacher training faculties; and d) strengthening the monitoring and information system, and consolidating the CSE database. UNFPA will intensify efforts to strengthen CSE for out-of-school young people focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalised and those with disabilities, through the Y-Peer network. In 2020, UNFPA will implement priority interventions in the framework of the joint UN–RYCO project in WB6 with focus on out-of-school vulnerable youth on peacebuilding and reconciliation by using the Y-Peer approach.

ILO will support the Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASCAP) in preparing the curricula and training materials to ensure improved negotiations, dialogue and dispute prevention skills of high-school students to become workers and entrepreneurs.

OUTPUT 2.3 - SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

Social protection measures and mechanisms at national and local levels are strengthened with budgets and clear targets that reflect equity and social inclusion standards

Contributing UN Agencies
UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNFPA, IOM

Contributing Partners
Government of Switzerland, the EU, UN regional/global funds

Financial Amount (USD)
3,024,173

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 16
Targets: 1.3, 3.7, 4.1, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 10.2, 11.10, 16.6

Implementation progress

The Albanian government recently approved extension until 2023 of the National Social Protection Strategy 2015–2020 and its Action Plan, the main policy document setting out its vision for an integrated social protection system. The Strategy provides the grounds for three major reforms: (i) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the poverty-targeted cash assistance, (ii) improving the situation of persons with disability, and (iii) establishing an integrated system of social care services at the decentralised level. While GoA is committed to implementing the legislative and institutional social care reforms, the administrative capacities handling social protection programmes remain limited at all levels, both in terms of the number of staff, and their technical competency. Services provided through the non-public sector—mainly financed by international CSOs and charities—have attempted to fill the gaps in public service provision.⁶⁰ The EU progress report for 2018 makes a clear recommendation for government to take further steps in the social care reforms, where policy intent has to be accompanied by adequate and effective budgetary allocations. The current budget allocated to social protection stands at nine percent of GDP, including contributory social insurance programmes, which occupy 80 percent of the allocations, and less than one percent of GDP allocated as child and family allowance, including cash

60. Post-Disaster Needs Assessment for Social Protection Sector, 2019.

transfers for poverty and disability. These levels are far below the average investment in social protection in the Europe and Central Asia region, of 16 percent of GDP. As the country faces challenges with fiscal space and is struggling to lower the level of public debt, a nominal budgetary increase is not possible. Therefore, better use of the existing resources and strengthened coordination and integration between social protection entitlements are imperative.⁶¹

Through the support of UN agencies to INSTAT and national partners to measure and report on multiple poverty and deprivation, Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) survey data for 2017 and 2018 were published in December 2019, reporting the new measurements of household and child poverty. In addition, child monetary poverty, using the EU indicator ‘children at risk of poverty’, was reported officially for the first time in Albania. Data on monetary poverty of Albanian children for 2017 and 2018 were published (29.6% reported at risk of poverty) and a roadmap developed to measure child multiple deprivation using the EU child deprivation index.⁶²

The resourcing of the Social Fund, a central government programme started in 2019 to finance social care services at the local level, is to be commended. Approximately ALL 100 million will reach fourteen municipalities: Durres, Elbasan, Gjirokaster, Kurbin, Lezhe, Librazhd, Lushnje, Maliq, Prrenjas, Roskovec, Peshkopi, Sarande, Tirane and Vlore. The budgetary line is maintained in 2020 and the planned budget for the Social Fund has increased to ALL 200 million,⁶³

61. EU Albania 2018 Report, p. 78. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-albania-report.pdf>

62. Some 29.6 percent of Albanian children have been reported to be at risk of poverty for 2017 and 2018, with girls affected more: about 30.6 percent of girls and 28.7 percent of boys were at risk of poverty in 2018, compared to, respectively, 31.8 percent and 27.7 percent in 2017. Through UNICEF support, INSTAT collected data on child non-monetary deprivation for 2018 and 2019 following Eurostat methodology, and developed a roadmap to measure child multiple deprivation using the EU child deprivation index.

63. Indicative amount reported by MoHSP officials in the working group discussions.

showing government commitment to investing in social care services. The secondary legislation necessary for enactment of the Law on Social Housing received continued attention in 2019 with ten secondary pieces of legislation developed and approved, using technical expertise from UNDP through the joint UN programme Leave No One Behind (LNB) and in consultation with groups of interest. This contributes directly to making progress towards achieving SDG 11, target 11.1 and indicator 11.1.1. The allocation of funds to resource social housing programmes at the local level in 2019 was ALL 720 million, 1.3 percent more than in 2018. Such budgetary allocations might be affected in 2020 by the burden put on the government budget by two emergencies: the earthquakes and the coronavirus.

The PDNA for Social Protection Sector following the 26 November earthquake noted that, in general, those affected continued to receive services where they were provided. However, the displaced population encountered difficulties in accessing some services requiring documentation to be obtained from the relevant administrative unit. The earthquake highlighted the need for improved social services and a functional assessment and referral system that is linked and interacts with the cash assistance programme.

Throughout 2019, several UN agencies in Albania provided technical guidance and tailored support to government on addressing the many issues in the social protection and inclusion area. Through the joint LNB programme (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA), under the leadership of MoHSP and with UNICEF support, the Action Plan of the National Social Protection Strategy 2015–2020 was updated and extended to 2022. The Strategy will continue to pursue three major policy reforms on economic aid, disability allowance and social care services. Marking a significant milestone, the government developed an Action Plan for

the Elderly 2020–2024 for the first time in Albania, a focus of UNFPA advocacy.⁶⁴

Municipalities were supported in strengthening their capacities in operationalizing social inclusion policies at the local level and in providing inclusive services. Through UNDP support, part of the LNB programme, a baseline study on the needs for social care services was conducted in partnership with State Social Services. Five municipalities⁶⁵ developed fully costed social care plans and 105 municipal staff were capacitated through training, mentoring and coaching in how to deliver quality services to vulnerable populations and through the provision of models and international best practice. With UNDP support, the integrated social services are fully implemented in Fier, Fushe Kruje and Lezhe and taken as best models for further scaling-up in other municipalities. New innovative service models at the local level for persons with disabilities (PWDs) were designed and implemented. These included establishment of community centres in Diber, Kruje and Ura Vajgurore, 31 info-days on rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities organised in three project sites⁶⁶ and attended by 587 people and their family members, and the strengthening of capacities of 31 service providers working with PWDs through formal trainings, study visits and mentoring support. Moreover, in line with the grant scheme's regulations for new social care services at the local level, UNDP allocated funds to resource the Social Fund and support social care services at the local level, with USD 125,056 to be provided to seven municipalities,⁶⁷ contributing directly to making progress towards achieving SDG target 1.4 - ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services.

64. Approved by Council of Ministers (24 December 2019), published in Official Gazette (30 December 2019). (<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2019/12/24/864/277fafa6-f845-4b1b-9d18-0dc7de9a55bb>)

65. Bulqize, Fier, Permet, Pogradec and Ure Vajgurore.

66. Diber, Permet and Ure Vajgurore.

67. Diber, Kamza, Permet, Prrerjas, Puka, Roskovec and Shkoder.

Similarly, through UNICEF support and part of the LNB programme, eleven municipalities developed three-year social care plans, fully costed and with clear targets to reach at least 60 percent of all children in poverty or in a vulnerable situation in each municipality. All eleven municipalities developed budget briefs, informing on spending plans related to the social care plan and social care services, highlighting gaps and recommending on how to improve budget planning for these services and ensuring a better and more effective mobilisation of available financial resources. UNICEF's advocacy resulted in additional public investments being made available at the local level in 2019. Six municipalities (Durrës, Librazhd, Maliq, Sarandë, Tirane and Vlore) will now have funds from the central budget for 2020 to establish social care services, which have been prioritised in the social care plan, contributing to the achievement of SDG 1, target 1.3, indicator 1.3.1.

UN Women interventions, through the LNB programme, focused on raising awareness and ensuring that municipal plans and budgets respond to the needs of vulnerable women and girls. Nine municipalities were targeted (3 completed and 6 ongoing)⁶⁸ and approximately 500 vulnerable women and young girls benefiting from training and awareness events, with a clear understanding of GRB, defining a list of selected gender-responsive priorities. A total of 2,500 women citizens (45% of participants) engaged in the public budget consultations, including those from the most vulnerable groups: youths, older women, those living in rural areas, women with disabilities, unemployed and single heads of household.

UNFPA's work, through the LNB programme, focused on municipal planning and budgeting of youth issues. Youth Voice and CSO advocacy platforms were established in five additional municipalities (Kruje, Maliq, Po-

68. Three completed—Korce, Shkoder, Tirane—6 ongoing: Durrës, Elbasan, Lezha, Lushnja, Peshkopi, Tirane.



WORK WITH DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

gradec, Shijak and Ure Vajgurore)⁶⁹ where the capacities of the municipal staff were also strengthened on SRH, ICPD and SDGs. Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the Youth Voice network of organisations and these municipalities, assisting them to plan and budget issues of interest including ASRH, education, gender, social protection and inclusion at the local level. Under this engagement, Youth Voice prepared a summary of the findings of a survey⁷⁰ conducted with 1,100 young people (aged 15–29 years) from eleven municipalities, measuring their perceptions and knowledge on SDGs, SRH and youth programmes offered by the municipality, and preparing also five fact-sheets on such knowledge and perceptions. Thus, by

69. Out of 15 in total: Diber, Durrës, Fier, Korce, Kruje, Lezhe, Maliq, Permet, Pogradec, Roskovec, Shijak, Shkoder, Tirane, Ure Vajgurore.

70. The summary was shared via social media and reached more than 1,000 people <http://jotabu.al/gjetjet-nga-anketimet-me-1100-te-rinj-ne-bashki-te-ndryshme-te-vendit/> All produced materials are uploaded to the **Jotabu portal** (www.jotabu.al) and the **Jotabu smartphone apps**, designed by the youth voice network to provide information on SRH through interactive windows and rubrics with around 95,000 visits per month and 2,300 followers.

the end of 2019, nine LGUs⁷¹ had included youth budgeting in their social workplans and two LGUs were monitored on allocation and use of youth budgets.⁷²

In addition, UNFPA, in partnership with IN TV, under the coordination of the Centre for Media and Social Issues and Infit Plus (two NGO members of the youth voice network), realised a series of TV shows dedicated to youth issues by covering the topics of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), gender-based violence (GBV), HIV & STIs, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the SDGs. Six episodes

71. Diber, Durrës, Fier, Korce, Lezhe, Maliq, Permet, Shkoder and Tirane.

72. As a result of UNFPA's systematic advocacy work, municipalities have included youth issues in their annual budget and plans, including: Promotion of young people's participation in democratic processes and decision making at the local level, through establishment of youth councils; Promotion of youth employment at the local level; Promotion of young people's participation in environmental protection and cultural activities in the city or town; Promotion of young people's participation and crucial role in SRH education through Y-Peer education and youth friendly services; Real engagement of young people in achievement of the SDGs.

were transmitted live on IN TV and rebroadcast over six weeks, conceptualised as a youth show focused upon four different angles: quizzes, discussions with experts, personal stories, and short inserts and videos. The episodes were shared on social media (Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) with roughly 40,000 views, with a further 100,000 through jotabu.al by the end of 2019, managed by the NGO Together for Life on behalf of the Youth Voice network. This initiative helped reach young people, parents, teachers and families and resulted in the promotion of additional discussions on sensitive issues through engagement of experts and advocates on UNFPA and ICPD issues. More than 50 articles were produced on pozitivi.org and 93 on jotabu.al for the issues of SDGs, SRH, empowerment of girls, international development days, early marriage, modern contraceptive methods and gender equality.

Equally importantly, following finalisation and approval by Parliament of the Youth Law (December 2019), by-laws will be developed and disseminated in 2020 and the process for review of the Youth Action Plan 2015–2020 and development of a new Youth Action plan are planned for 2020.⁷³ The Law was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth in close consultation with UNFPA and UN agencies, representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and ILO, in the framework of the LNB programme. The Law aims to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision making affecting their lives, and to hold the duty bearers accountable. The working group established for this process, which included youth representatives and organisations, contributed with inputs during the drafting stage, and

73. A working group was set up to draft the first ever Youth Law in Albania, whose development was a request of youth organisations and young activists, issued by MoESY Order no. 98, dated 05.03.2018 'For the establishment of the working group to draft and prepare for approval the Draft Law 'On Youth''. UNFPA was approached by the Ministry to support with technical expertise and mobilisation of young people all over Albania to participate and be consulted on this draft law.



LNB PROGRAMME - WORK WITH DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

discussed the Law with young people all over Albania during the consultation stage.

Thanks to a major step taken by government to implement EU-SILC, the survey offers a key opportunity to improve gender-based analysis by using it as a baseline. UN Women, in collaboration with INSTAT, is undertaking a vulnerability mapping study with a focus on women and girls in the target 16 municipalities of the LNB project. The mapping will be finalised in May 2020 and provide policymakers with information about the current situation and the main poverty-risk-factors for citizens, including women and girls, in the 16 municipalities.⁷⁴

74. This is a result of UN Women in Albania's joint implementation of the UN Joint Programme Leave No One Behind with UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA towards drafting social care plans and local budgets that promote social protection services for vulnerable populations.

Technical assistance from UNICEF to government, through the LNB programme, has expanded the scope of the Management Information System (MIS) of the cash transfer programme for social care services. Workflows and standard operating procedures were developed for the MIS of social care services to become part of the social protection MIS. More than 300 municipal staff in 19 municipalities were trained and mentored in the use of the system and how to enter data according to case management practices and system protocols. In addition, thanks to UNICEF support, INSTAT collected data on child non-monetary deprivation for 2018 and 2019 and reported officially for the first time on child monetary poverty in 2019, using the EU indicator children at risk of poverty. INSTAT has also in place a roadmap to measure child multiple deprivation using the EU child deprivation index.

MoHSP undertook a mid-term assessment of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020. It was supported by UNDP, through the LNB programme, in designing the methodology, including the data collection instruments and validating them with relevant stakeholders in a participatory process. The report, presented in mid-January 2019 to the National Council on Persons with Disabilities, served as a stimulus to announce 2019 as the Year of Accessibility. In addition, MoHSP was supported in organising the National Conference 'Accessibility and challenges for inclusiveness', held in May 2019 and attended by 140 participants representing a diversity of stakeholders including disabled people's organisations. The conference discussed accessibility issues, achievements and challenges, and highlighted the importance of raising stakeholder awareness on this topic. The conference recommended the development of an action plan to improve accessibility legislation and standards and their implementation. As a result, and with technical assistance of the LNB programme, MoHSP drafted four by-laws for implementation of Law no. 93/2014 'On inclusion of and accessibility for persons with dis-

abilities' and initiated the drafting of an Accessibility Action Plan 2019–2021 for Persons with Disabilities in Albania. The joint efforts contribute directly to making progress towards achieving SDG, targets 10.2 and 10.3, indicators 10.2.1 and 10.3.1.

UNDP, through the project 'Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians', supported government in its efforts to achieve the objectives set forth in the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians (NAPIRE) for the year 2019, while promoting respect for human rights, gender mainstreaming and inter-cultural dialogue, prerequisites for Albania's EU integration. As a result, the Romalb system is functional; coaching was provided to more than 200 public officials and R&E focal points to implement and report progress on NAPIRE; integrated employment measures were implemented in Berat, Durres, Shkoder and Tirane to break the cycle of poverty for R&E women and men, while 163 R&E obtained work or started up a business during the year, and more than 400 managed to sustain the economic activities they had previously initiated; a training book and course curriculum on life skills and basic literacy was designed by UNDP and endorsed in 2019 by three ministries—MoHSP, MoESY and MoFE—to become part of the curricula in schools, vocational education training (VET) and community centres of Albania; 368 R&E enjoyed improved access to the services of civil registration, education, health and social care provided through a pilot model of integrated community-based social services; and the living conditions of more than 1,000 R&E families (approximately 4,500 inhabitants) were improved through of a wide variety of community upgrading infrastructure projects: construction of sewage systems, water supply, lighting, reconstruction of kindergarten crèches, and other interventions in line with the needs and priorities of communities.

Through the LNB programme, UNFPA continued to scale up the community-based model to increase

demand of the vulnerable for quality integrated SRH services. In the municipalities of Malesi e Madhe and Puke, and in the remote parts of Berat, Elbasan and Korçe, a total of 90 awareness-raising sessions were organised, with the participation of more than 2,000 Roma community members; capacities of 335 activists from R&E community were enhanced through learning sessions on SRHR, enabling them to contribute as health mediators⁷⁵ in the monitoring⁷⁶ of implementation of social services at the local level and to intensify the work in the field for this community, while a training toolkit was designed and developed, tailored to the specifics of R&E; and three advocacy meetings were organised with representatives of MoHSP, focusing on the importance of recognising the role of the health mediator in the health system as an important element for implementation of the Action Plan of the R&E Strategy 2016–2020.

In the area of social housing, MoFE reviewed the minimum standards for adequate solutions tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities, supported by UNDP through the LNB programme. The review resulted in the drafting and consultation of a technical report on design and construction norms and standards, followed by the defining of a set of minimum standards for adequate housing solutions presented to MoFE as part of a package of by-laws on the Law on Social Housing.⁷⁷ Some 72 participants, of whom 28 were officials from 21 municipalities, engaged in a capacity building and consultation workshop with LNB–UNDP support for the implementation of the Law on Social Housing. The joint efforts contribute directly to making progress towards achieving SDG

75. Some 86 health mediators were identified in this group aiming to intensify fieldwork for these vulnerable and marginalised communities.

76. Based on a monitoring model for implementation of SRH and youth policies and strategies with focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised, whose development was supported by UNFPA, established in five additional LGUs: Krujë, Maliq, Pogradec, Shijak and Ure Vajurore.

77. Some 19 by-laws and DCMs were drafted and consulted with a diverse interest group, with ten of them endorsed by the Council of Ministers, and entered into force in 2019.

11, target 11.1 and indicator 11.1.1 - proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing.

Albania's recent legislative changes for the promotion of social enterprises and the creation of a related state fund represent an opportunity for UN Women to support the development of the social economy in Albania. Building on international good practices, UN Women has identified the gaps that require immediate addressing and has created entry points for enhancing capacities of public sector stakeholders (national and local authorities) to support and promote social entrepreneurship within their respective mandates. The environment for development of social enterprises as a growth sector has been strengthened with legislation being put in place during 2019 for the financial framework for an efficient operation and the registration of social enterprises. The financial framework was designed and endorsed on the means of supporting social enterprises through subventions. A fund for social enterprises has been created to the value of ALL 249.76 million for the period 2019–2021. The fund subsidises social enterprises activity, with new job positions enabled for employing disadvantaged groups and social and health security provided for disadvantaged groups employed in such enterprises. UN Women guided the entire process of legislation drafting by providing expertise in the drafting of by-laws and designation of the fund. UN Women also technically supported ministry budget users to integrate the Social Enterprise Fund in the Medium-Term Budget Programme of MoHSP.

Challenges

At the policy level, the challenge of operationalization of the mechanism for monitoring and implementation of the Social Inclusion Policy Document (SIPD) 2016–2020 has continued to persist since the first year of



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSION

the programme. Initially, the LNB plan foresaw the establishment of a Statistical Integrity Indicators Group (SIIG) as part of the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) system. In 2018, the IPMGs were re-grouped following an order from the prime minister, while UNDP continued to offer support in setting up the necessary structures for coordination. Furthermore, and depending on the set-up and functioning of SIIG, UNDP will support MoHSP to facilitate and coordinate the production of an annual social inclusion report that describes and analyses social progress in Albania. Increased cooperation between MoHSP and INSTAT is being encouraged over this matter.

The support to INSTAT for processing and publicly presenting SILC 2016 data, and later SILC 2017 and SILC 2018, was re-scheduled several times before taking place in November 2019. This affected LNB programme implementation, specifically the support for measurement of and reporting on social inclusion in-

dicators with regard to SIPD, as well as the design of targeted interventions and the combined government and UN efforts to measure their impact on the vulnerable population.

Legislation and policies cannot be implemented if there are no clear and easy-to-use tools and guidelines. For the tools to be relevant, they need to be technically sound, but also their feasibility must be assessed on the ground, and they need to be validated with all stakeholders and standardised for national use. Tools for social care planning developed with UNICEF support are now being used by all national and international stakeholders. The monitoring process of policy documents such as the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (NAPPWD) 2016–2020 highlighted the need for stronger engagement of stakeholders to coordinate, collect data and share information across the institutions at central and local levels, particularly for issues on PWDs.

Capacity building is not a single and one-way process. Tailored training for local authorities on the theoretical know-how and practice required for effective social care service management was key at the start, but was followed with mentoring and coaching, while local authorities improved (and resourced) the internal structures, and followed the implementation process and the monitoring of the plans. At the local level, municipalities demonstrated limited capacities to build the necessary structures and system for social services to enable delivery of integrated social services as foreseen in the Law on Social Services. In addition, lack of professional staff (with the social worker as a key figure in the system), weak Needs Assessment and Referral Unit (NARU) structures for case management, lack of adequate funding from municipal budgets, lack of knowledge of the social inclusion legislation and of the policy framework in related areas (education, employment, VET, health, housing) render difficult the implementation of social care plans designed by municipalities with the support of LNB. At the community level, CSOs have demonstrated scarce capacities in budget literacy and public finance management for scrutiny of public budgets at the local level and provision of recommendations.

Active engagement with decision makers in the municipalities and in interest groups, including representatives of communities, is crucial during the development, implementation and monitoring of social care plans. Stronger coordination among governance levels is needed for the future, especially with regard to implementation of the new law on social care. Coordination is also needed among different partners working in the area to support the LGUs, as uncoordinated support can produce negative effects that might have a long-term impact on social care governance and on institutional and beneficiary trust in the new system.

Regarding expansion of the advocacy and lobbying work on SRH priority areas at municipal and community



LNB PROGRAMME - WORK WITH DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

levels, national coverage remains a challenge, requiring additional resources, financial and human, and focused packages of informative materials for targeted influencers, for certain hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups, as well as for communities at large. Youth policies following implementation of the law at the local level remains a challenge. Given Albania's stage of development and status as an upper-middle income country, increased access to services for people not-easy-to-reach needs to be intensified all across the country. More effort should be focused on expanding work on the ground with the engagement of partner CSOs and networks, as well as with establishment of new partnerships at the local level and mobilisation of youth groups and grassroots who know the context, who can be strengthened to work with those most in need and can follow up sustainability with local government, holding it accountable for its promises and commitments.

Heightened political tension and recent earthquakes have impacted implementation to varying degrees throughout the year. As a result, some activities at the local level have slowed and some delays have taken place, e.g., during the start of operations of community centres in two municipalities (Permet and Ure Vajgurore), and finalisation of local MTBPs and participatory budgeting processes in six municipalities.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Under the joint LNB programme currently being implemented by UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF, the focus will remain on operationalizing the Laws on Social Services and Social Enterprises, strengthening the systems, standardising the services, consolidating good practices, replicating services, ensuring sustainability of investments, and scaling up successful practices and innovations. Concrete actions to be implemented by UN agencies contributing to the LNB programme include: continuation of work in target municipalities to foster dialogue between LGUs and communities; delivery of services through capacity-building interventions for vulnerable groups and their representative organisations on rights and inclusion; delivery by municipalities of community-based integrated social services; Social Fund implementation, with municipal grants for implementation of social care services; development of at least 20 local social-care plans, and their implementation; building of capacities of municipal social services units in 61 municipalities, and the service providers, to plan, budget, deliver and monitor social care services; support for government in tailoring accessibility interventions for PWDs and the conducting of social impact assessments in selected municipalities to influence the design and implementation of gender sensitive services and investments.

In 2020, the UN in Albania launches its global SDG Fund-financed joint project Improving Municipal Social Protection, to be implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO. It aims to support Albanian Government translate the policy intent into proper local actions so that men, women, girls and boys living in poverty, or vulnerable situation have access to integrated, quality social care services - supports the vision of an overall inclusive Albania, making progress towards SDGs 1-5, 10, and 16. It will ensure: Integrated social care services, institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms functional with clear roles and responsibilities at local level in 6 municipalities; Municipal and national institutional capacities strengthened through training and mentoring for the development of social care plans and accessing the Social Fund; Innovative models of integrated social care services piloted, including established local linkages between health and social protection services; Vulnerable communities (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability etc.) empowered to actively participate in decision making and make institutions accountable; Financing options for extending social protection coverage and benefits developed and assessed at the national and municipality levels.

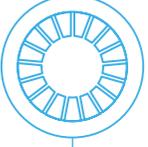
OUTPUT 2.4 - CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection systems are strengthened to prevent and respond to cases of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children, with a particular focus on vulnerable children and families

- 

Contributing UN Agencies
UNICEF, WHO, IOM, ILO
- 

Contributing Partners
Government of United Kingdom, Ending Violence against Children (EVAC) Fund, UNICEF Global Thematic Funds
- 

Financial Amount (USD)
724,651
- 

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 1, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17
Targets: 1.3, 1.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 8.7, 10.2, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 17.6, 17.9, 17.17, 17.18

Implementation progress

The available body of evidence suggests that violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of children continue to exist both in the family and in institutional settings in Albania, and that the phenomena remain often unaddressed and even socially accepted.⁷⁸ The child protection system is yet to be consolidated in a way that provides a comprehensive coordinated response to children in need of protection, and at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, including in the online environment. The newly adopted legislation on child protection and rights has clarified roles and responsibilities, as well as accountability lines both at the central and local levels and has set the grounds for an integrated child protection system. However, despite an improved normative framework for child protection, its implementation is weak and the establishment of a comprehensive and integrated national system of child protection is yet to be accomplished. Specific bottlenecks are related to inefficient, overlapping, issue-based and fragmented interventions, as well as lack of investments. Local action is predominantly dependent on services provided by NGOs.

High expectations are associated with the newly defined role of the municipalities in the provision of

78. For instance, the 2017–2018 Albanian Health and Demographic Survey revealed that even though trends have been improving as compared to the previous (2008–2009) survey, almost half (48%) of the children surveyed were disciplined with some form of psychological or physical aggression <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/albania-demographic-and-health-survey>



A CHILD PROTECTION WORKER DURING A MOMENT OF CARE

social services, particularly through municipal Child Protection Workers (CPWs). However, the number of CPWs is much lower than the legal requirements, and even fewer of them, less than 30 percent, have an adequate background in social work. The State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child has been taking a more active stance recently, initiating a review of the national vision for child protection and of the existing legal framework. Nevertheless, the agency lacks the capacities⁷⁹ to implement fully the wider mandate and the higher responsibility vested in it by the new legislation.

Recent evidence on children's experiences of the Internet shows that child abuse, exploitation and violence happening in the digital environment is increasingly emerging as a concern for children and parents in Albania. Fourteen percent of Albanian children using

the Internet have reported experiencing upsetting experiences in the digital space, while nine percent reported at least one unwanted sexual experience online.⁸⁰ Despite the large number of referrals of child sexual abuse materials being reported to authorities, only a handful have been investigated and even fewer brought before justice. While the legal framework for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation online is not far from international standards, considerable gaps have been found in the institutional response and professional capabilities of the authorities in charge of preventing and responding to such cases.⁸¹

Albania is also a source, transit and destination country

79. Since 2012, the Agency is operating with seven employees, including finance and administration staff, and relies on donor funding for the implementation of its programmatic activities.

80. UNICEF 2020, One click Away: Children's Experiences of Internet in Albania <https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2486/file/one%20click.pdf>

81. UNICEF 2019, Webfactor: Assessment of the Legal Framework and Institutional Readiness to address Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Online in Albania <https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2151/file/2019%20Webfactor%20Assessment%20of%20CSEA%20Online%20in%20Albania.pdf>

for adult and child victims of human trafficking. Children,⁸² particularly those in a street situation, youths and women, including members of R&E communities, are often most vulnerable to human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour. In addition to unemployment and poverty, vulnerability to trafficking is influenced by a constellation of interconnected risk factors that cut across individual, family, community and structural layers, including gender discrimination, domestic violence and substance abuse, and physical and sexual violence against children and young girls, along with sudden stress, such as following the death of a family member.

In 2019, UNICEF's support to the government resulted in the completion of a legal framework for child protection, with the focus shifting to implementation of the improved policy and legal framework. MoHSP finalised and adopted a full range⁸³ of by-laws with regard to the Law on the Child Rights and Protection. The State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child (SARPC) enhanced the capacities of local child protection structures to fully understand and effectively implement the revised legal framework. Meanwhile, government coordinated its strategic interventions for development of the national child protection system through the work of the Child Protection Coalition,⁸⁴ which assisted SARPC in (a) organising an annual national conference of CPWs,⁸⁵ (b) developing a child friendly version of the Law on Child Rights and Pro-

tection,⁸⁶ and (c) mobilising an effective coordinated response to the November 2019 earthquake, resulting in addressing the psycho-social needs of 2,988 individuals, including 2,315 children. Moreover, the Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country Strategic Workshop,⁸⁷ organised by MoHSP in cooperation with ILO and OSCE, identified national priorities to combat the hazardous situation of child labour in the country. Albania joined Alliance 8.7 in July 2018, whose intention is to reach zero child labour by 2025. In November 2019, the National Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights approved a two-year action plan prepared by MoHSP on Combating the Economic Exploitation of Children, and committed to preparing a national child labour report.

Strengthening the child protection work force is a priority. UNICEF, in support of MoHSP, revised the existing in-service training curricula for child protection and social workers to reflect the new legislation on child protection and juvenile justice. This was followed by a memorandum of understanding signed with the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA) to incorporate the new curricula in their standing programme. This is a remarkable achievement and ensures sustainability and mainstreams this critical training course as part of the accredited continuous learning system for civil servants. Nearly 50 CPWs were trained in the new training module in 2019. In addition, supported by IOM, capacities of CPUs to identify and assist (potential) Victims of Trafficking were increased throughout the country, in accordance with the SOP for Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking. This resulted in 59 (potential) Victims of Trafficking identified by CPUs in 2019 compared to 26 in 2017.

82. According to UNODC (2018), 30 percent of trafficked persons in the world are children. In 2017, 41 percent of potential victims of trafficking referred to the NRM were children.

83. Twelve DCMs and five Instructions.

84. Comprising UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision, Terre des Hommes, OSCE Presence in Albania, and Council of Europe.

85. The conference National Coalition in support of child protection workers took place on 24–25 April 2019. 150 CPWs and directors of social services at the local level from all municipalities participated in the conference. The objective was to establish a community of CPW professionals and identify the key challenges and gaps in the existing capacities of CPWs for identification, coordination and management, and in reporting cases of children in need of protection, and to identify the best possible ways to support them: https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=UNICEF%20Albania%20child%20protection&pa=SEARCH_BOX

86. The final draft is in the final stages of development and will be available for the public in 2020.

87. <https://www.alliance87.org/events/pathfinder-country-strategic-workshop-albania/>

MoHSP has been spearheading the childcare reform currently under way in Albania, with direct technical support from UNICEF, aiming to ensure a transition from institutional to family- and community-based care. To support this critical shift, UNICEF supported social services workforce training and the development of plans for the progressive transformation and closure of children institutions. As a result, some 240 children residing in nine public residential institutions were comprehensively assessed and their Individual Development and De-institutionalisation Plans developed. Advancing the de-institutionalisation agenda for children deprived of parental care is a crucial building block of the social protection system, thus contributing towards the achievement of the SDG 1, target 1.3, indicator 1.3.1, and their social inclusion, thus contributing also to the achievement of SDG 10, target 10.2, indicator 10.2.1. Throughout 2020, the public authorities will be supported to implement these plans, with support and services also for the family of origin. Another important step in the year will be the transformation of two public residential care institutions into family support hubs. UNICEF will also provide technical support to establish a viable model of foster care families in Albania and to improve the normative framework to make de-institutionalisation possible and implemented in the best interests of the child, for every child.

In 2019, as part of the direct technical support to Mol and the Albanian State Police, UNICEF carried out an in-depth assessment of the systemic, procedural and human capacity gaps in enforcement of the law, dealing with the investigation of online child sexual abuse in the country. The assessment report *The Lost Cases*, which was shared with the responsible government authorities,⁸⁸ revealed a staggering gap between the volume of referrals of potential child abuse materials coming from international law enforcement agencies

88. Ministry of Interior, Albanian State Police and Prosecutor's Office of Tirana.

(5,000–15,000 per year), and the number of cases investigated (3 or 4 cases in 3 years), and also identified structural and procedural gaps. Following UNICEF's active advocacy in 2019 and efforts to increase awareness among the public and relevant institutions of online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) in Albania, an agreement was reached with the Chief Prosecutor of Tirana and Mol to establish a dedicated Task Force that will look into the investigative bottlenecks of online crimes against children.⁸⁹

Online abuse of children was addressed through multiple channels. Two dedicated studies on children's online experiences—*One Click Away: Research into Children's Experience of Internet Use in Albania*, and *WebFactor: Assessment of the Legal Framework and Institutional Readiness to address Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse online in Albania*⁹⁰—laid a solid foundation to current and future programme interventions (local and global) and also contributed to the national and global knowledge generation on this rapidly emerging new area for child protection. A strategic partnership agreed between the National Cyber-Security Authority and MoESY on violence against children illustrates how many different government agencies can be engaged on this topic. The Peer-to-peer Programme on Online Safety⁹¹ was designed together with and implemented by more than 312 peer educators, thus generating a strong feeling of ownership and participation. As a result, more than 12,286 school children (6,250 girls and 6,036 boys) benefited from the peer-to-peer programme, in 46 schools in seven counties of Albania.⁹² Joined efforts in this regard, contribute to reducing all forms of violence

89. Given the national emergencies of the 2019 earthquake and COVID-19, the Task Force was not established formally with a MO or DCM.

90. One Click Away, <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/one-click-away>; WebFactor, <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/webfactor>

91. In line with the INSPIRE and WePROTECT model national response, UNICEF placed children in the centre of its action as key change makers: <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/peer-educators-online-safety>

92. Berat, Diber, Elbasan, Fier, Kukes, Lezha and Tirana.



PLAY YOUR RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

against children as envisioned in the SDG 16, with particular reference to targets 16.1, 16.2 and 16.3 and all indicators under these targets.

UNICEF Albania partnered with Tirana Municipality to promote the Friendly Wi-Fi Albania initiative, an innovative solution that protects children and families from harmful online content while accessing free Wi-Fi in public spaces. Five Friendly Wi-Fi public spaces are already operating in Tirana.⁹³ Remarkably, data from June to December 2019 show that just one friendly Wi-Fi spot alone blocked on average 32,000 Internet requests per month for access to blacklisted or adult sites, 150 various blacklisted or adult websites, and 3,000 items of material content of child sexual abuse or pornography. In the long run, this initiative sets an

example in placing the best interests of a child in a business or profit-making endeavour, as more Internet service providers and telecommunication companies join this initiative.

As a result of UNICEF's continuous advocacy over the last decade, the National Child Helpline ALO 116 received financial support from the government for the first time in 2019, nine years after its creation in 2010, marking a significant shift in terms of the recognition of its central role in the child protection system and its sustainability. As a result, 893 children received direct help and counselling through the Helpline in 2019. All cases (100%) that required referral were referred to the necessary services. Meanwhile, nearly 4,500 children and adolescents have received psycho-social counselling online through the web-based platform nukjvetem.al, supported by UNICEF. In 2019, this platform was extended with a new counselling service

providing chat sessions, adding to its direct support on mental health and child protection-related issues.

Challenges

The Justice reform and the vetting process have sidelined more than half of the judiciary, delaying the engagement of judges and prosecutors in the capacity building activities of UN agencies. In the framework of UNICEF's rolling work plan for 2020 and 2021, agreement was reached with the School of Magistrates on the inclusion of children's protection issues on the list of thematic lectures in the academic year.

The 6.4-magnitude earthquake that struck Albania on 26 November 2019, left 51 people dead and some 14,000 homeless, and about 2,000 injured. UNICEF's child protection priority, alongside all LGUs and civil society partners, was significantly shifted towards a life-supporting emergency response.

A major challenge regarding investigation of child sexual abuse through the Internet has been the identification of adequate expertise in the country, or even abroad, that would address the capacities of the law enforcement and prosecution sectors. UNICEF struggled to identify a reputable consultancy group outside the country, available and willing to provide long-term assistance to Albanian law enforcement on the issue of online crimes against children. Assistance from two UNICEF offices (Ghana and Jordan) has been precious in engaging an international digital forensic investigator to assist the Sector for the Investigation of Computer Crimes for a six-month period.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNICEF support to government and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child will focus on

implementing the revised architecture of the national child protection system, through the capacitation of the child protection workforce, as well as the support to core child protection services for children at risk of abuse, violence exploitation and neglect, including reporting of violence, emergency support and psycho-social support to children and families. The implementation of the De-Institutionalisation Plan will continue with the second phase focusing on the facilitation of reunification of children living in residential state institutions with their biological families, as well as increased access to alternative, family-based, care services. Addressing the protection of children and youth at risk of human trafficking will be the focus of the current workplan, and also on the most affected regions in the northern part of the country. Separate attention will be paid to children's protection from online sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, as this is a new and rapidly emerging area of child protection. Building on the support provided to earthquake-affected populations, with psycho-social support and child protection services, UNICEF will support government in the development of child protection preparedness plans for emergencies.

MoHSP and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child will be also supported by ILO, WHO and IOM to (i) coordinate the collective efforts invested by various actors in the area of children's economic exploitation, in the framework of the global Alliance 8.7 intending to eliminate child labour by 2025, and in preparation of the Child Labour Report for Albania; (ii) capacitate the health-related workforce around child protection issues and local health authorities to monitor child protection issues and cases, and support GoA in developing an emergency-related preparedness plan; and (iii) enhance monitoring mechanisms and CPUs for pro-active identification and implementation of SOPs for protection of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking.

93. The five spaces are: lake park area, Kalaja pedestrian area, Skanderbeg Square, New Bazaar and Students' town.

OUTPUT 2.5 - GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Capacity of institutions and service providers to implement legislation and normative standards on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) and other forms of discrimination is strengthened



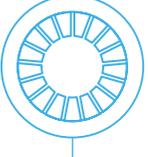
Contributing UN Agencies
UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNFPA, IOM, WHO



Contributing Partners
Governments of Australia, Korea, Sweden, the EU, Intesa Sanpaolo Bank of Albania, UN regional/global funds



Financial Amount (USD)
1,186,122



Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 5, 8, 16
Targets: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 8.7, 16.1, 16.2

Implementation progress

Official data reaffirm that violence against women and girls in Albania is widespread and still a serious human rights violation. In 2018, the third population-based national survey on violence against women and girls, conducted by INSTAT⁹⁴ in cooperation with UNDP and UN Women, and with the support of the governments of Australia and Sweden, showed that more than one in two Albanian women (52.9%) have experienced one or more forms of violence during their lifetime, and more than one in three (36.6%) have experienced violence in the last twelve months. For the first time, this survey makes possible the baseline measurement of three SDG 5 indicators: 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.3.1.⁹⁵ Similarly, the latest qualitative study on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions with regard to child marriage, prepared by UNICEF and UNFPA, indicates that the communities affected in Albania still have preferences for child marriage, though people are aware of its illegality and the harm it causes.⁹⁶ The social norms fuelling this phenomenon and viewing it as the best option for girls are influenced by gender stereotypes, as well as by realities of social exclusion and living in poverty. In

94. National Statistics Institute in Albania.

95. Indicator 5.2.1: the 2018 Survey reveals that women and girls have experienced psychological violence at 19.7%; physical violence 7.2%; sexual violence 3.6% and intimate partner violence 33.7%. Indicator 5.2.2: the 2018 Survey reveals that physical violence from a non-partner in the last 12 months amounts to 2.3% and sexual violence from a non-partner and 0.0%. Indicator 5.3.1: The 2018 Survey reveals that marriages under year 18 years of age amounts to 6.1% and marriages under 15 years of age amounts to 0.0%.

96. <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/child-marriage>



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV 2019 CAMPAIGN

addition, the recent Demographic and Health Survey (2018)⁹⁷, supported by UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA, indicated an increase in the prevalence of child marriage (from 10% to 13% compared to the 2009 Survey), affecting eleven percent of girls and two percent of boys. This survey contributed to measure achievements made toward SDG 5 and 16, specifically to targets 5.2, 5.3 and 16.2, indicators 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, and 16.2.1.

In September 2019, the outcome report of the UPR⁹⁸ on Albania was approved in a plenary session of the

Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Report made some 197 recommendations in multiple human rights areas, including gender-based violence and harmful practices, and received a very large number of recommendations (around 33) from other states. Despite progress achieved with the 2018 amendments introduced on the Law on Measures against violence in family relations⁹⁹ ('Domestic Violence, DV' Law) and the Law on Free Legal Aid¹⁰⁰ (FLA Law), implementation of these laws and respective key by-laws has yet to be ensured. According to the recent functionality assessment of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) for preventing and responding

97. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR348/FR348.pdf> Conducted by the Institute of Public Health (IPH) and the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT). ICF provided partial technical assistance to the project. Funding for the 2017-18 ADHS was provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

98. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/048/74/PDF/G1904874.pdf?OpenElement>

99. Amendments improved the legal definitions of domestic violence in line with the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW, ensuring better protection for women and children in situations of immediate danger.

100. Women survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking will benefit from both the new free legal aid system and expanded protection measures for victims of crime.

to gender violence,¹⁰¹ 35 out of 40 CRMs are operational, and function with varying degrees of effectiveness. Some progress has been made to provide on-site emergency services relying on local resources, but specialised services and long-term re-integration services are largely scarce. Moreover, capacities of state institutions, CSOs and NHRIs need to be further strengthened for reporting on and monitoring Albania's progress in Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW).

During 2019, UN support to the government resulted in an improved legal framework related to VAW and alignment with international human rights and practices. For example, UNDP supported MoHSP and Mol to develop several by-laws, adopted in 2018,¹⁰² related to the Law on Measures against violence in family relations, and entering into force in February 2019.¹⁰³ The Council of Ministers and MoJ adopted (in March 2019) several key by-laws,¹⁰⁴ with UNDP support, that enable effective implementation of the FLA Law and a safer environment for women victims of domestic violence to report to authorities. Three other by-laws related to the DV and FLA laws are

101. MoHSP took the lead supported by UNDP.

102. MoHSP and Mol joint instruction no. 866, date 20.12.2018 'On procedures and model of risk assessment for cases of violence in the family realm' and joint instruction no. 912, date 27.12.2018 'On procedures and model of order for preliminary measures of immediate protection'.

103. Official journal, 26 February 2019.

104. DCM no. 110, date 6/03/2019 'On the Procedures and documentation rules for NGO authorisation in offering free legal aid services and benefiting from state budget and funding'; DCM no. 55, date 6/02/2019 'On the Procedures and documentation rules for NGO authorisation in offering free legal aid services and benefiting from state budget and funding'; DCM no. 1, date 6/3/2019 'On changes to DCM no. 4, date 12/12/2012 for 'Remuneration & payment criteria of court experts & witnesses'; Prime Minister Order no. 59, date 25.03.2019 'On the approval of the structure and organogram of the Directory of Free Legal Aid'; Ministerial Order (MO) no. 1, date 8/3/2019 'On the Rules & procedures for administration of information' (as per FLA law article 7/i Rules & procedures for administration of information); MO no. 2, date 25/03/2019 'On the procedure, periodicity and rules on change of circumstances' (article 31/1 Procedure, periodicity & rules on change of circumstances); MO no. 225 date 25/03/2019 'On approval of the model forms for free legal aid services' (as per articles 7, 17 and 19 of FLA); MO no. 226 date 25/03/2019 'On approval of the contract models for free legal aid services (as per article 7/e and ë, the model contract with not-for-profit organisations for primary legal aid services). UNDP has provided support to MoJ in the frame of the Access to Justice programme with UNDP core funding.

awaiting MoJ approval. MoHSP established and led a multi-stakeholder dialogue for the drafting of a comprehensive Law on Violence against Women, as well as a policy and procedures against harassment and sexual harassment to protect women and men in the workplace. The Minimum Standards of Social Care Services for GBV–DV Victims and Survivors in public and non-public (short-term) residential emergency centres were approved (15.11.2019), along with ten by-laws pertaining to amendments to the 2018 DV and FLA laws, supported by UNDP, while other by-laws are being drafted. UNFPA supported review of five SOPs, including one for GBV, to align them with the legal changes to the DV Law, currently awaiting MoHSP approval. All these efforts contribute to the achievement of SDG goal 5, target 5.1, indicator 5.1.1 - legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

The year 2019 marked an improvement in the monitoring and assessment capacities of governmental and non-governmental actors, through UN Women's provision of on-the-job learning and training, to prepare and submit national reports and reviews on international and national commitments on human rights and women's rights. These reports include: i) a national report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +25 process led by MoHSP and MEFA, and the CSO shadow report for BDPfA submitted by the Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence; ii) a UPR shadow report and CEDAW follow-up report prepared by the Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence; iii) a CEDAW alternative report currently being prepared by the People's Advocate; and iv) monitoring of implementation of Objective 3 (GBV) of the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) 2016–2020 in five new municipalities,¹⁰⁵ in addition to six municipalities where monitoring has

105. Fier, Kamez, Lezhe, Pogradec and Saranda.



LAUNCHING THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV 2019 CAMPAIGN

been ongoing since 2018¹⁰⁶ by leading women's rights CSOs.

Other efforts focused on improving capacities of authorities, or strengthening community awareness and the ability of individuals to seek assistance. With the support of UNDP, improved VAW–DV implementation capacities of local actors and law enforcement agencies were ensured through provision of certified trainings by ASPA, the School of Magistrates, benefiting 21 trainers, 329 police officers, 43 DV local coordinators and 34 judges, prosecutors and judiciary chancelleries. Furthermore, around 200 service providers¹⁰⁷ received training by CSOs, supported by UN Women, to implement in practice changes stemming

106. Durrës, Elbasan, Korce, Shkoder, Tirane and Vlore.

107. From police, municipality staff, health-care professionals, teachers, referral mechanism members in two municipalities (Kamez and Lezhe).

from amendments to the DV Law to effectively protect and support survivors of DV. On the community side, around 1,800 women and girls, men and boys were better informed about harmful stereotypes that enable violence and mechanisms to report violence at the local level. Women from vulnerable communities (R&E, LBT and women with disabilities) had the chance to learn about inter-sectional discrimination and the availability of existing services through awareness-raising meetings and art as a tool to shed light on their stories (photo exhibition, booklet and video of real life stories and radio shows). Furthermore, the need for tailored resources and response to violence against these groups was addressed through tailored training for service providers and members of the referral mechanisms in several municipalities.¹⁰⁸ Improving protection and support services for survi-

108. Elbasan, Shkoder, Tirane and Vlore.



'What were you wearing?'

The art installation 'What were you wearing?' featured clothing built around 20 testimonials of survivors of rape, addressing the universal experience of victim blaming.

vors of violence encourages reporting and non-acceptance of violence as a normal occurrence and private part of life. In general, reported cases have increased in recent years. However, prevalence is higher as reporting remains low, albeit increasing. Working towards more efficient services for survivors directly contributes to SDG target 16.1 (indicator 16.1.3) and target 5.2 (indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2) as the end goal is to eliminate violence against women and girls by offering support services, and thus an alternative to continued violence.

Generation of evidence-based knowledge and data on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women was ensured, through UNDP and UN Women support, from the National Population Based Survey on Violence against Women and Girls (2018), establishment of baselines for monitoring and reporting on GBV indicators related to SDGs 5 and 16, and functioning of CRMs in municipalities. The CRMs data generation in REVALB show a total of 637 GB-DV cases recorded during 2019, compared to 545 in 2015. Field data show 2,834 protection orders issued by the state police in 2019, compared to 2,174 in 2015.

In addition, the scaling up and consolidation of CRMs is crucial as these mechanisms serve as an institutional response to VAW at the local level. Through UNDP support, eight new CRMs¹⁰⁹ were established in 2019, bringing the total number established across the country to 49 (80% of 61 municipalities), while four existing CRMs¹¹⁰ were consolidated. Meanwhile, UN Women supported the monitoring by women's CSOs of the proper functioning of CRMs in eleven municipalities, and data show an overall increase in the number of CRM meetings and cases treated between 2017 and the end of 2019.

In an important milestone for Albania, the first pilot centre for survivors of sexual violence, the Liliun centre, opened its doors.¹¹¹ In its first year of operation, Liliun offered a range of specialised integrated support services to 39 survivors of sexual violence (24 children and 15 adults; 30 females and 9 males). The centre upgraded the database recording sexual violence cases in compliance with adopted national standards and operational procedures of services for victims and increased professional capacities of the multi-disciplinary, including psycho-social, staff at Mother Theresa University Hospital (23 persons).¹¹²

Awareness raising on GBV-DV issues among others has been at the focus of UN in Albania work in 2019, aiming to shift attitudes and societal norms regarding gender roles and ultimately prevent violence from occurring in the first place whenever possible, contributing directly to SDG 5.2, (indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). The main campaign was 16 days of activism against GBV-DV, with the slogan "Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!", launched on 25 November 2019 by MoHSP with the support of UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA, in partnership with civil society and local state institutions. Multiple events¹¹³ were organised to raise awareness of GBV-VAW, including child marriage and early unions that reached more than three million people across the country¹¹⁴ through a diverse range of tools: videos, art exhibitions, infographics, TV interviews and social media. Following the theme of the 16-day campaign, innovative tools and forms of engagement were employed by UN Women and its partners. The Kuboiddy street art exhibition elaborated upon the experiences of violence against women

109. Divjake, Dropull, Fushe-Arrez, Has, Kucove, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq and Selenice municipalities supported by UNDP.

110. Bulqize, Himara, Klos and Roskovec municipalities supported by UNDP.

111. Liliun centre functions under the leadership of MoHSP with UNDP support.
 112. Gynaecologists, psychiatrists, forensic medics, nurses and psycho-social staff.
 113. 61 awareness-raising activities on GBV-VAWG organised in 21 municipalities.
 114. This figure is calculated with inclusion of the reach of the social media campaign, mobilised discussions by users and views of the videos published by Anabel Media, and UNDP data collected via social media.

and girls (VAWG) at home or in public spaces. An on-line magazine campaign engaged young Albanians on the issue of rape, using Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The campaign reached almost two million people with a total view count of 440,000. The art installation ‘What were you wearing?’ featured clothing built around 20 testimonials of survivors of rape, addressing the universal experience of victim blaming. In addition, around 120 girl students and women from different walks of life and survivors of domestic violence and trafficking received training in self-defence, personal safety, and how to de-escalate different forms of violence. Empowerment Self-Defence (ESD), a set of tools to gain confidence and respond to situations that might be uncomfortable or violent, was combined with Aikido martial arts. In addition, UNICEF and UNFPA, in collaboration with MoHSP and the Centre for Openness and Dialogue at the Prime Minister’s Office, organised a series of discussions with boys and girls from the secondary schools of Tirana County to inform them of the findings of the study Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions with regard to Child Marriage, and, based on these, to encourage their actions against gender stereotypes and child marriage and early unions. For Valentine’s Day, UNICEF launched ‘A storybook engagement’ video¹¹⁵ with messages of awareness against child marriage that it disseminated widely on national television stations. UNFPA and the Observatory for Child Rights, in collaboration with UNICEF supported IN Television to focus an edition of ‘No Tabu’ towards adolescents with a programme on child marriage, in which legal information, messages, a true story and quizzes were broadcast (see also output 2.3 for further details on UNFPA’s IN Television edition).

Challenges

The local elections of June 2019 brought changes to leadership in many municipalities, posing risks with regard to CRM staff retention and commitment to GRB implementation, especially for financing rehabilitation and reintegration services for GBV survivors. Respective UN agencies have established contacts with the newly elected mayors to gain their political support and commitment for smooth implementation of the programmes.

Implementation of activities planned in the framework of the 16 days of activism campaign against GBV was launched on 25 November, the day before the major earthquake struck. These and other activities were re-adjusted in each municipality to accommodate solidarity interventions, along with awareness-raising activities using CRM local resources, and continued beyond the planned closure of the campaign on 10 December.

To further consolidate and sustain Liliu centre’s integrated multi-sectoral emergency services to sexual violence survivors and even to scale it up into other regions in the country, there is an urgent need for allocation from the annual state budget and provision for additional staff¹¹⁶ to (i) provide responsive services to the needs of the sexual violence victims, (ii) mitigate the burn-out of the current staff,¹¹⁷ leading to staff turn-over, (iii) address staff burn-out through psychological supervision, and (iv) improve the data management system to ensure data safety and accessibility by the courts.

116. Medical and psycho-social staff.

117. Currently only two staff are serving in the Liliu centre, and are on call on a daily basis.

Despite continuous efforts at the community level, harmful societal norms and behaviours are difficult to uproot. Issues of GBV are seen to a great extent to belong to the domestic sphere, with a reluctance to report to relevant institutions. The perceived role of women continues to reflect a dominant patriarchal mentality. More wide-scale and all-inclusive efforts should continue to shift current paradigms on women’s role in society, especially vis-à-vis family responsibility, that encourage and justify violence against women and girls. Meaningful change requires increased actions, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Efforts of UN agencies (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, ILO) will aim to contribute to the overall goal of eliminating violence against women, girls and children through supporting the adoption, reform and implementation of laws, by-laws, policies and strategies to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls, and boys, including victims of trafficking, as well as harmful practices, such as child marriage. Specific output level results in 2020–2021 include (i) a strengthened normative and accountability framework related to VAWG, including harmful practices, (ii) improved institutional practices, services and coordination for survivors of VAWG, and (iii) challenged norms pertaining to VAWG (including child marriage) at the state, community and individual levels with a keen focus on the most vulnerable women and girls. All major interventions will be guided by existing evidence, along with relevant knowledge-generation exercises, and contribute to implementation of the National Strategy on Gender



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV 2019 CAMPAIGN

Equality and its Action Plan 2016–2020,¹¹⁸ and all other relevant strategies targeting vulnerable women and girls.

118. There are plans to develop a new Strategy for GE 2021–2025 based on assessments that the GE sector in MoHSP has undertaken periodically on implementation of the standing Strategy. UN agencies (UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA) will support MoHSP with technical expertise for the development of the Objectives focused on GBV–DV.

115. <https://he-il.facebook.com/unicef/videos/291336891558756/>

OUTCOME 3

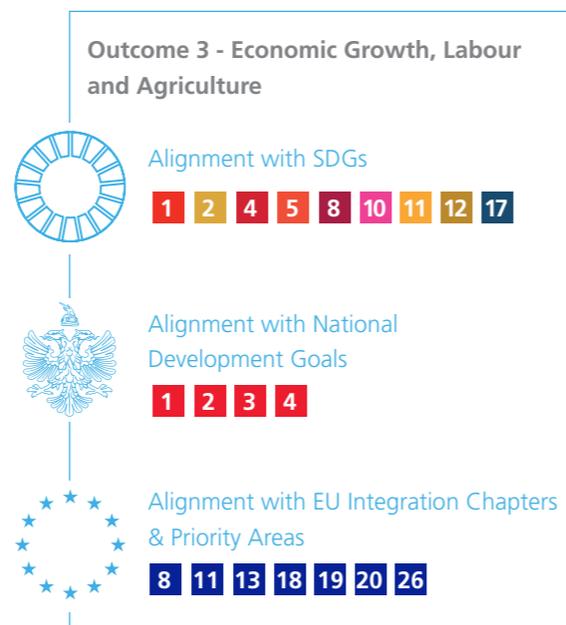
Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture

Economic growth priorities, policies, and programmes of the Government of Albania are inclusive, sustainable, and gender-responsive, with greater focus on competitiveness, decent jobs and rural development.

Outcome 3—Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture—consists of four outputs focusing on 1) Economic Development, 2) Labour, 3) Agriculture and Rural Development, and 4) Culture.

This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving four priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Growth through increased competitiveness, 3) Investing in people and social cohesion, and 4) Growth through sustainable resources and territorial development. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 8, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20 and 26.

In 2019, the total available budget for implementation of Outcome 3 was USD 3 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Austria, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, as well as the EU, and Peace-building Fund. The outcome delivery was 86 percent.



Outcome 3 delivery (USD million), 2019



Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that out of 13 targets, **eleven (85%) are on track and two (15%) are partially on track.**

For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2019
No. new businesses established by sex of owner	Total 16,731 Female 1,947 Male 14,784	Total 18,624 Female 11,248 Male 7,376
Youth unemployment rate (young men and women (15 – 29) who are: without work; available for work; and seeking work)	Total 34.2% Female 35.9% Male 33.3%	Total 21.4% Female 21.5% Male 21.2%
Growth of agriculture sector 2016 - 2020	2.25%	3.5%
Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service	11%	28%
Culture mainstreamed within development programmes at all levels, by means of providing an evidence base on the impact of culture for development and implementing a national strategy for culture	No	Approval of Law 27/2018 "On Cultural Heritage and Museums" (May 17, 2018). Adoption of the national Strategy for Culture 2019-2023 and Action Plan (May 2019).

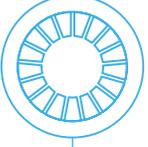
OUTPUT 3.1 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Central and local governments are able to deliver effective economic support services and implement urban development policies that promote gender equality, the green economy and inclusive and sustainable industrial development

- 

Contributing UN Agencies
UNCTAD, UNECE
- 

Contributing Partners
Governments of Sweden and Switzerland, the EU
- 

Financial Amount (USD)
384,000
- 

Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17
Targets: 1.1, 4.4, 8.3, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.b, 11.c, 12.a, 17.14

Implementation progress

Albania is an upper middle-income country on its path to EU accession. In 2018, GDP per capita was USD 13,364 in PPP (World Bank, WB; PPP international), and in 2019, the country ranked 69th in the UNDP Human Development Index. Albania’s economy has grown by an average of 2.4 percent during the past decade, grew by 2.2 percent in 2019, and is projected to grow by 2 percent in 2020 (revised 2020 projections following the earthquake of November 2019).¹¹⁹ Expansion of the tax base and reduction in the informal economy are major government challenges (WB Enterprise Survey 2019). Household consumption fuelled by remittances continues to be one of the main drivers of growth. In the short to medium term, post-earthquake investments and recovery will assist growth while a reduction of foreign investment (especially after completion of large projects in 2019 but also challenges in friendliness to business) and vulnerability to climate variability (especially rainfall for hydro dams) present risks.¹²⁰

Albania ranks 81st in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Economic Competitiveness Index. The country scores well in terms of its human capital but is considered not to be competitive in terms of innovation, research and development capabilities, entrepreneurial culture and transport infrastructure. The WB World Enterprise Survey shows that Albanian companies lag

119. Prior to impacts of COVID-19.

120. Of course the COVID-19 crisis of early 2020 will strongly affect this analysis.



PARTICIPATION OF ALBANIA IN THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON COMPETITION LAW AND POLICY ORGANIZED IN GENEVA IN JULY 2019

far behind many other countries with a similar level of per capita income on several factors mainly associated with innovation. Indeed, the lack of business sophistication due to low levels of productive know-how, lack of modernisation and limited interaction with the financial sector are some of the main concerns of the private sector.

Albania ranks 82nd in the 2020 World Bank Doing Business indicator. Persistent weaknesses in the legal framework (e.g., property rights and contract enforcement), along with known difficulties in obtaining construction permits, paying taxes and accessing electricity, affect the country’s investment climate. Although in terms of FDI, Albania’s net inflows have averaged an impressive level of 8.2 percent of GDP during the past decade, they have been concentrated mostly in electricity, extraction industries and telecommunications, and sourced from only a few countries (WEF, Growth Lab, CID Harvard).

Albania’s economy could benefit from competition and consumer protection given their direct and important role in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. Empowered consumers who know and enforce their rights are subject to fewer abuses. Over the years, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recommendations on competition policies have contributed to improving the overall welfare of consumers and to creating a level playing field for businesses, which must apply a common set of standards, supporting competition. Competition creates possibilities for small- and medium-sized enterprises, removes barriers that protect entrenched elites and reduces opportunities for corruption.

In 2019, UNCTAD supported the participation of the chairwoman of the Albanian Competition Authority in the annual meeting of the Inter-governmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy in Geneva

(10–12 July). Given Albania’s aspirations to join the EU, this forum is of strategic importance as it aims to (i) improve the legislation on competition and consumer protection and align it with the objectives of European regulations; (ii) strengthen the capacities of the competition authority; (iii) train staff and judges in Competition Law and Policy and related topics; and (iv) exchange the experts’ views on the implementation of appropriate activities. Moreover, it aims to support the realisation of the achievement of SDGs 8, 9, 10, 12 and 17. A key result from the Geneva meeting included the experts’ recognition of the importance of the provision of training courses in Competition Law and Policy and the need to introduce new items into the national regulations aiming at strengthening competition, all crucial to facilitating the process of EU accession. It contributes, among others, to the achievement of SDG indicators 12.a.1 and 17.14.1.

Housing is a fundamental human need that can influence public health, security and the wellbeing of both present and future generations. In 2018, Albania passed Law no. 22/2018 ‘On social housing programmes’ and developed a programme for low-cost housing. With more than 50 percent of Albania’s inhabitants currently residing in urban areas, a transition towards more sustainable housing in the country could have an extremely positive impact.

To strengthen national capacity for the development of evidence-based policies for sustainable housing and urban development and to support the realisation of achievement of SDG 11, MoFE, supported by UNECE, organised in Tirana a national workshop on ‘Evidence-based policies to achieve SDGs: sustainable housing and urban development in Albania’ (2–3 May 2019).¹²¹ Following the workshop, national programmes for social and low-cost housing in the country, including development of an online system for collection of applications for housing by vulnerable groups, will be finalised by the end of September

121. <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51162>

2020. A second workshop on the same theme will take place in 2020, again in Tirana.

Challenges

From the perspective of entry into the European common market, informality, despite continuous government action, is still of major concern to economic growth, competitiveness and public finances, and negatively affects new investments in the country. Increased technical assistance to the Albanian Competitiveness Authority in the areas of competition and consumer protection can play an important role.

The Territorial–Administrative Reform process in Albania has emphasised decentralisation and local autonomy. At the same time, central government has shifted the struggle in housing and urban development to the local level, requiring support from all partners.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNCTAD will continue supporting government and relevant institutions to strengthen the country’s trade policy framework to adapt to EU standards in key areas such as debt management, investment promotion, trade facilitation, enterprise development and competition. The Albanian Customs Administration will be enabled to implement a harmonised data model across all stakeholders according to the Business Process Model to facilitate the movement of goods across the Western Balkans and implementation of a National Single Window. In the area of housing policies, UNECE efforts will focus on strengthening national capacity to collect data, as well as on developing evidence-based policies on housing, urban development and land administration.

OUTPUT 3.2 - LABOUR

Labour market governance, tripartite dialogue and collective bargaining are strengthened and reduce informal employment, improve occupational health and safety, and enhance the employability of youth, women and other vulnerable groups

- Contributing UN Agencies**
UNDP, ILO, FAO, UN WOMEN, IOM
- Contributing Partners**
Governments of Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom, the EU, Peacebuilding Fund
- Financial Amount (USD)**
1,443,761
- Alignment with SDGs**
Goals: 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17
Targets: 2.3, 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.b, 4.c, 5.5, 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9.3, 9.b, 9.c, 10.1, 10.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.b, 17.3, 17.8

Implementation progress

Although Albania has stable economic growth, acceleration of that growth is paramount for achieving convergence with the EU standards the country needs as an aspiring member. Albania is still one of the poorest countries in Europe with an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 23.4 percent in 2018 (INSTAT and EU–SILC 2019). The national minimum monthly wage is USD 232, compared with an average of USD 470 (31% of the EU average). During the fourth quarter of 2019, the employment rate of the working-age population (15–64 years) was 61.6 percent, an increase of 3.1 percent upon that of the same quarter of 2018.¹²² The annual employment growth rate by main economic sector was 6.4 percent in industry, 2.3 percent in services and 2.3 percent in agriculture. The official unemployment rate in Q4 2019 was 11.2 percent. Although youth unemployment remained high, at 21.4 percent, it is experiencing a slight decrease annually.¹²³ Unemployment in Albania is largely long term and structural, with long-term unemployed (more than one year) comprising 66 percent of the unemployed. Women, youth and those with little education are more excluded from jobs. At 26 percent, Albania NEET youth (Not in Employment, Education and Training) is the highest in the region.

The government has committed to promoting quality

122. LFS INSTAT, Q4 2019.

123. LFS INSTAT, Q4 2019.

jobs and skills opportunities for all Albanian women and men with the aim of supporting equitable and sustainable economic growth in the country. This goal is being achieved through ensuring effectiveness of labour market policies, offering quality skills development opportunities, promoting equality and social inclusion, and strengthening the education, training and labour market governance framework. The three main laws of the sector have been adopted, including Law no. 15/2019 'On promotion of employment', providing a new context for moving forward with the restructuring of the employment governance system. In addition, in 2019, based on the Law on Social Enterprises (approved in 2017), MoHSP sent an invitation to interested entities to apply for the status of social enterprise,¹²⁴ fulfil social objectives and use the profits gained to expand their activity and encourage entrepreneurship by creating new opportunities for involvement in active schemes of social protection and employment and of particular benefit to women.

The National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2019–2022 is focused on not only modernising the structures and functions of national agencies (National Agency for Employment and Skills, National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification), but also on designing policies and programmes that aim to address the specific needs of vulnerable youth, people with disabilities, rural inhabitants and those who face difficulties in joining the labour market. A NESS 2014–2020 mid-term review¹²⁵ was finalised in 2019 with technical support provided by the UNDP

124. The law aims to provide a good legal framework for 'social enterprise' subjects in line with best European practices. It also sets the characteristics, as well as the social and economic criteria, an organisation shall fulfil to be legally considered and recognised as a social enterprise. A package of by-laws has been drafted and endorsed that creates the necessary conditions for development of social enterprises as a growth sector and as agents for positive change. Completion of the legal framework on social enterprises in Albania opens opportunities to 2,378 NGOs active in the country, of which 70 (3%) can apply for the status of social enterprise.

125. https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/mid-term-review-of-the-employment-and-skills-strategy-2014-2020.html

programme 'Skills Development for Employment' to MoFE, as a milestone of the monitoring and evaluation plan of this Strategy from its adoption in 2014 until 2018. This comprehensive review assessed the entire set of outputs for 52 actions, 16 sub-objectives and the four strategic priorities. The report was presented to and endorsed by the Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG) for Employment and Social Policy. Findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review form the basis for the implementation extension of the Strategy and for revision of its Action Plan 2019–2022.

Paying attention to the above contextual development, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SD-C)-funded programme Skills Development for Employment (SD4E), implemented by UNDP, commenced its consolidation phase in January 2019 and focused its support on implementation of the priority actions to support the government's reform in the employment and skills development sector. Key achievements during 2019 include:

- Revision of the Action Plan of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019–2022, based on the findings of the mid-term review and wide consultations with stakeholders, and adopted by the Council of Ministers (DCM no. 659, dated 10.10.2019); ii) Conducting of a comprehensive functional analysis of MoFE and the National Employment Service (NES), and a new organisational structure and modern functions proposed to transform NES into the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES), with the proposals adopted by DCM no. 554, dated 31.07.2019; and iii) Development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for all institutions responsible for implementing employment and VET policies that was consulted with MoFE, NAES and National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification (NAVETQ).

- Impact evaluation report on the Employment Promotion Programmes (EPPs) implemented in 2016–2017 by NES; ii) Assessment and revision report of the current typology and implementation approach of the Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) to better address the needs of unemployed jobseekers registered in the employment offices. (The ALMPs were reconceptualised based on an approach that focuses on the profiling and needs of the jobseekers, existing programmes were re-designed with regard to delivery mode, and new packages, such as the Community Employment Programme, were introduced and endorsed by MoFE and NAES Management.); and iii) Ensuring the sustainability of the previous phase of SD4E initiatives. (The Self-Employment Programme has been taken on board by MoFE as an integral part of the EPPs and as part of the EPPs reform, targeting unemployed jobseekers registered in the employment offices.)
- A comprehensive VET review, including a description of the current level of implementation of the reform, an outcome analysis of the system and a road map for systemic private sector engagement in VET126 being carried out by SD4E with a first draft report in place on this process; ii) More than 100 representatives of government (MoFE, NAVETQ, NES), VET providers, private companies and VET students consulted in focus group discussions and through in-depth interviews; iii) Self-Assessment of 44 public VET providers carried out for the first time and a full report developed and endorsed by NAVETQ; and iv) Support to NAVETQ on implementation and further de-

126. The consultation process for a systemic private sector engagement in VET commenced as part of the VET review process. A workshop with the participation of main employer organisations and associations (Union of Albanian Producers, Albanian Tourism Association, Albanian Food Industry, Albanian IT Association) took place in November 2019. The consultation process focused on engagement of the private sector in: a) labour market observation and skills needs analysis, b) design of VET qualifications and programmes, c) work-based learning implementation, and d) assessment of professional competences.

velopment of the Albanian Qualifications Framework commenced with a study visit by key national stakeholders to Ireland, the first country to develop a National Qualifications Framework based on a social partnership approach.

One key novelty of the Employment Promotion Law is the establishment of a Social Employment Fund, which will be managed by NAES and finance various types of employment programmes for people with disabilities. Based on UNDP's pre-analysis and recommendations, the law introduces a quota, or levy, scheme for public and private employers and establishes an Employment Social Fund to finance programmes that aim to support training and employment programmes for PWDs and their families.¹²⁷ To tap the potential of this legal provision, UNDP commissioned one international expert to explore the typologies of ALMPs and a skills matching tool for PWDs. In close collaboration with the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) and in consultation with NAES, a set of programmes were designed for on-the-job training, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship and start-ups, employment programmes, and workplace adjustments, among others. UNDP will continue to support NAES in reforming its employment services, profiling techniques and matching tools to better address the needs of PWDs who are clients of the employment offices. Furthermore, UNDP worked directly with the working group established at MoFE to design two crucial by-laws that would ensure implementation of the quota, or levy, scheme, i.e. the composition, criteria and roles of the board of Employment Social Fund administrations and the

127. This newly introduced quota or levy scheme foresees that each employer with more than 25 employees should employ one person with one or more disabilities, and an additional person for every 50 employees thereafter. If the employer fails to fulfil this obligation, the employer needs to contribute to the Employment Social Fund an amount of 100 percent of the minimum wage per month for each obligation not fulfilled. With the current stratification of employees at the Tax Administration office in Albania, based on the data provided by the General Directory of Taxes, in August 2019, if this provision of the law were to be fully implemented, 8,857 PWDs would be employed. On the other hand, if the employers were to only contribute to the Employment Social Fund, around EUR 23 million would be collected each year (public and private employers included).

procedures the employer will follow to contribute to the Fund.

The ILO support to all its constituents in Albania aims at enabling a fair, fast and inclusive access to justice for all, including vulnerable categories of workers, through peaceful settlement of labour disputes, collective bargaining, collective agreements and creation of informed policies on prevention and amicable settlement of labour disputes. In the area of labour relations and social dialogue, the ILO provided technical support to the Secretariat of the National Labour Council (NLC), the highest platform of social dialogue for the world of work in Albania established under the Ministry of Finance and Economy, in strengthening capacities on the operation of the case management system of the Labour Dispute Resolution in line with the provisions in the Labour Code of Albania.¹²⁸ The Secretariat is expected to provide for more effective proceedings of the NLC.

In collaboration with SIDA, the ILO initiated a three years project on Access to Justice in Labour Disputes through Mediation and Conciliation. The Project “support to building an effective system for Labour Dispute Resolution in Albania” will look into fixing the legal gaps and inconsistencies, building the professional skills among the state mediators and conciliators, and raising the awareness among the workers, employers, and their organizations on the advantages of the availability of a professional, fast and free of charge service granted by the state for the settlement of labour related disputes.

In line with the Law on Employment Promotion, the ILO enabled the core staff of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Qualification (NAVEQ) and MoFE to upgrade their knowledge and capacities on how to establish and operate a Sector Skills Committee, through a dedicated training conducted in Turin at the International Training Centre of ILO. Besides, in line with the above law as well as the NESS priority on rural areas, the ILO in collaboration with Business Albania, Employers’ representative and the ILO constituent, supported the conducting of a skills anticipation research (wine production value chain). During this process, a methodology was prepared to capacitate Sector Skills Committees¹²⁹ to conduct skills research that correspond to selected value chain/private sector needs and requirements. The methodology will be used by NAVETQ with other sectors skills committees to be eventually established. The ILO efforts under this output contribute to the achievement of several SDGs such as SDG 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16 and 17, targets 4.1, 4.3, 5.5, 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8, 8.9, 8.b, 9.3, 9.b, 9.c, 10.1, 10.2, 16.3, 16.6, 17.3, 17.8, and indicators, to mention a few, 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 5.5.2, 8.5.2, 8.8.2, 8.9.1, 9.3.1, 9.b.1, 16.3.1, 16.3.3, 16.6.2, 16.7.2, 16.a.1.

FAO also supported the local government to deliver promotion and training activities on safety and quality standards, geographic indications (GIs), and organic and traditional products to a total of 200 farmers and agro-processors, along with the extension service, in six municipalities of Albania: Gjirokaster, Korce, Lezhe, Malesi e Madhe, Permet and Tirane.

Challenges

The employment sector continuous to face many challenges: lack of employment and skills development services in rural areas; insufficient and uncoordinated labour market information; lack of meaningful private sector engagement in VET; weak absorption capacities of institutions to implement employment and VET reform; unstable institutional set-up; and a need to introduce and roll out an accreditation model for public and private VET providers. Moreover, the two recent national emergencies the country is dealing with—the earthquake of 26 November 2019 and COVID-19—constitute major hurdles for the smooth operations of both central and local governments, as well as for the technical support provided by the UN. While the country is making efforts to cope with these emergencies, government has announced an economic plan to address, over the very short term (three months), the needs of businesses and laid-off workers, in an effort to counter the expected severe economic repercussions and an increase in the unemployment rate. Besides continuing to support the government in carrying forward the labour sector reform, the UN is also revisiting its programmes to best align them with the emerging needs and priorities of Albania in response to the two emergencies.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

The SDC-funded SD4E programme, implemented by UNDP, will focus its interventions in the following areas: 1) Employment and VET Policy Design will support MoFE for an Annual Work Plan; roll out the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the employment and VET sector; support improvement of the legislative and institutional framework; develop a Roadmap for a Labour Market Observatory; and finalise the Outcome analysis of the

Albanian VET system and a roadmap for systemic private sector engagement in VET; 2) Employment Policy Implementation will finalise the reform process of the employment services; conduct an impact assessment of the Self-Employment Programme; and support NAES in rolling out the Programme as part of ALMPs; and 3) VET Policy Implementation will develop an accreditation model for VET providers; develop a national model for continuous professional development of VET teachers; and support implementation of the Albanian Qualifications Framework.

ILO will support upgrading of Out-of-Court Resolution of Labour Disputes through raising awareness and providing relevant information and mediation skills to the ALDR system in Albania. The ILO will continue its technical support to NAVETQ in establishing Sector Skill Committees as per the obligation deriving from the Employment Promotion Law. Bearing the importance of working conditions in the wellbeing of the workers as well as in the productivity level of the enterprises, the ILO will support the State Labour and Social Service Inspectorate in upgrading their capacities in the area of Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace. The Labour inspectors will be trained in building appropriate OSH protocols and monitoring the compliance of the enterprises to the set protocols as per different sectors and industries. As provided for in the OSH policy paper, these activities will benefit not only labour inspectors but also employers’ and workers’ representatives, contributing to the achievement of SDG 8.

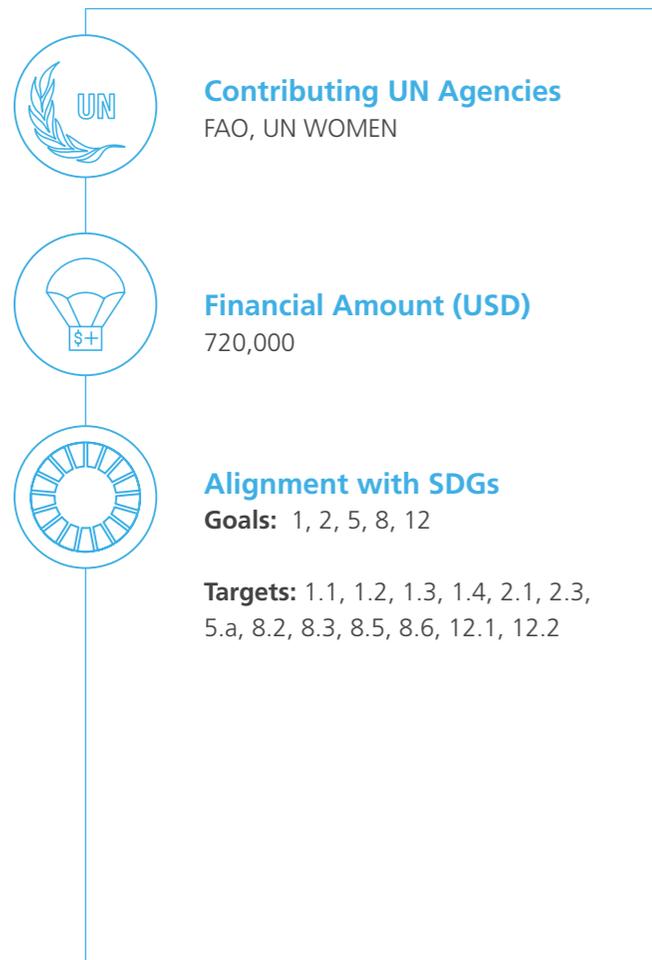
The ILO and FAO will collaborate in replicating the value chain skills anticipation methodology in other sectors of agriculture (i.e. dairy value chain). FAO will focus on VET and skills for farm diversification (produce and types of farms) and agri-tourism, climate change and disaster resilience, sustainable and innovative agriculture and rural development.

128. The stakeholders in the labour disputes resolution system, such as MoFE, NAES, workers and employers organisations, School of Magistrates and the chamber of private mediators, have been contributing along with ILO towards consolidation of this system following the provisions in the Labour Code of Albania.

129. The recently approved Albanian Qualifications Framework Law does make reference to the setting up of Sector Skills Committees in charge of identifying skills and qualifications at the sectoral level. The AQF Law was approved in early 2018, while Sector Skills Committees remain as pilot and supported by donors.

OUTPUT 3.3 - AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is increased capacity to design and implement policies and strategies for sustainable rural development and modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women



Implementation progress

Agriculture continues to be one of the main pillars of the Albanian economy contributing 19 percent to GDP (INSTAT 2019) and providing jobs to one-third of employed people in the country. The mean annual growth rate in the sector over the last five years is estimated at 3–3.5 percent.¹³⁰ Growth value added (GVA) in agriculture has increased by two- to three-fold since 2007, reaching about EUR 2.33 billion in 2018. Over the last decade and a half, the sector has become more efficient, farms have become more productive and profitable, and labour productivity, measured as GVA per full-time employee, has more than doubled. Nevertheless, its development is still below potential, mostly as a result of problems in the sector stemming from rural exodus, the small size of farms, land ownership, marketing of agricultural produce, irrigation and drainage, low level of technologies employed, weak organisation of farmers and a low level of development of the agro-food industry in the country. A considerable proportion of working-age women who work on farms are engaged, and 1.8 times more likely than are men, in unpaid family-farm labour (INSTAT 2019). The average size of the family farm in Albania is only 1.3 hectares, compared to an EU average of 14.2 ha (Eurostat 2019). Agricultural activity is made difficult due to increased transport and production costs, limited maximisation of investment effects, and the utilisation of advanced technologies made virtually impossible.

¹³⁰ Albania's Economic Reform Programme 2019–2021 <https://www.financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Economic-Reform-Programme-2019-2021.pdf>

Accelerating economic growth and reducing rural–urban disparities requires the modernisation of Albania's agriculture and agro-food processing sectors. In particular, value chain development involving food production linked to tourism, promotion and development of local products, increased financial literacy and improved access to finance are some of the main drivers of rural development (SDG MAPS 2018).

Ever since it obtained EU candidate status, Albania has emphasised agriculture and rural development reform as a means to maintain competitiveness while the country opens up gradually to the EU and the rest of the Western Balkans. In January 2018, government endorsed priorities in the field of agriculture and rural development for the period 2018–2020, with a focus on increasing rural income through diversification and rural tourism activities.

In 2019, UN agencies in Albania supported the government's key priorities, with increased focus on smallholders, rural women and youth, diversification of economic activities, mainly in three geographical areas (Belsh, Korce and Malesi e Madhe), and promotion of GIs, and organic and traditional products in the same areas. Attention was placed on strengthening MoARD capacities for statistical reporting and technical negotiations in agriculture and trade with the EU, as well as on SDG data collection and monitoring, focusing on SDGs 2, 5, 14 and 15. Furthermore, as Albania was hit by a strong earthquake in November 2019, UN agencies activities were focused on development of the PDNA and Post-Disaster Recovery Programme.

Advancements in the agriculture and rural development sector framework were made in 2019, supported by FAO, through the development of an Action Plan on e-Agriculture strategy 2021–2027, which will be used for the Digital Summit to be held in Tirane in 2020, as well as development of a concept note and ToR for the new ISARD 2021–2027, endorsed by MoARD. In 2020, GIZ will support the ministry with preparation of a new

2021–2027 Agriculture and Rural Development Sectoral Strategy.

Awareness is growing of the pivotal role of rural women in agriculture. Within the framework of the 3rd edition of the country's largest agricultural fair, Albania Working the Land, which took place during 16–17 November, FAO and UN Women raised awareness on best practices in relation to typical organic products, slow food and rural women products, by (i) promoting information materials on the work of UN Women and FAO in the country; (ii) inviting a slow food team to demonstrate their cookery methods using typical produce from Albania; and (iii) promoting honey products by two women beekeepers and honey producers from Gjinar, Elbasan, formerly supported by UN Women. As the fair received more than 1,000 visitors a day, the outreach of this joint awareness activity was significant.

FAO continued in 2019 its support to smallholders for diversification of their economic activities, and committed to an additional programme for the year 2020. Main product chains were selected in the project areas of Belsh, Korce, Malesi e Madhe and Permet, and related support programmes to be implemented from 2020 were validated with stakeholders. In addition, in the same areas, GI, organic and traditional products were promoted, and networking of producers, targeted consumers, local restaurants and tourist shops was strengthened to encourage marketing of their produce. Moreover, 102 women gained access to the national subsidy schemes of MoARD, partly credited to UN Women's technical work in engendering the budget programmes of the ministry. However, the number of such women is still very small, constituting only five percent of all beneficiaries. This FAO and UN Women support contributes to achievement of the SDG targets 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.3, 8.2 and 8.5, and related indicators for Albania, such as 1.a.1, 1.2.1, 1.4.1, 2.3.1, 8.2.1 and 8.5.1.

Through FAO support, a pilot national school food and nutrition project started in Baldushk, Tirana, in collab-



SUPPORTING THE THIRD EDITION OF THE LARGEST AGRICULTURAL FAIR IN ALBANIA "ALBANIA WORKING THE LAND"

oration with the private sector and public institutions. More than 300 small dairy farmers were grouped and trained to produce quality and safety milk, which will be collected and processed by a private dairy company and channelled into one primary school in Tirana for a 'milk and snack break' for the pupils. The private company is supporting the cost of the milk produced and delivered to school. The purpose of the project is to (i) establish a model of horizontal (group of farmers) and vertical cooperation (farmer to collector or processor) for safety and quality milk production that will also increase small farmers' incomes; (ii) link local producers to school feeding programmes; (iii) promote healthy dietary practices; and (iv) implement intensive health and nutrition education and training to school teachers, children and parents. The pilot model will also be replicated to the communities of larger farmers to promote economic development of rural areas. This support contributes to achievement of the SDG targets 1.1, 1.2, and, especially, 2.1, and related indicator 2.1.1, among others.

MoARD capacities have been strengthened with regard to agriculture statistics, data collection, reporting, and economic and policy analysis for technical negotiations in agriculture and trade with the EU, supported by FAO. The 2019 Statistical Annual Report was produced in collaboration with MoARD. In addition, FAO experts participated in the national and international teams assessing the post-disaster damages and losses in agriculture, following the November earthquake, feeding the analysis into the PDNA report produced by government.

Challenges

Limited capacities of MoARD with regard to EU integration negotiations might influence preparations on Chapter 11, as well as preparation of the approximation plan and renewal of the Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (ISARD) 2014–2020. The low absorption of both national and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development (IPARD) funds,

especially for smallholders, who remain a marginalised stratum, remains a problem and is delaying the emergence of results of the impact of the support (already provided by government, IPARD and development partners) to the smallholders. Moreover, economic strengthening of rural women continues to face difficulties in terms of property ownership, rights to resources, and access to financial and advisory services. To address this issue, UN Women and FAO have developed a project, Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT), which is pending finalisation of the funding commitment from the Italian government, delaying the start of implementation.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

Building on the recommendations of the latest Commission on the Status of Women regarding rural women, UN Women will collaborate with FAO and MoARD in strengthening the roles and contribution of women to rural development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core principle of leaving no one behind. During 2020–2021, effort will focus on providing models of change for rural communities, including identifying local interest groups that are able to effectively utilise and invest available funding in supporting their rural economy and tourism. The focus of FAO will be on increasing rural income through support provided to smallholdings and family farms, focused on rural women and youth, in the diversification of economic activities, as well as absorption capacities of smallholders for national and IPARD funds; formulating and endorsing with government new investment opportunities and schemes targeting smallholders, women and youth; strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for agri-food production and climate change resilience for increased competitiveness and sustainability of the agriculture sector; continuing the support for MoARD with regard to agriculture statistics, data collection, reporting, economic and policy analysis for technical negotiations in agriculture and trade with the EU, as well as on EU ap-

proximation, for Chapter 11; starting preparatory work for ISARD 2021–2027; promoting GI, organic and traditional products; and continuing support for government on DRR and the Post-Disaster Recovery Programme.

Moreover, FAO, UN Women and ILO will collaborate to enhance farmers' access to finance, land, VET, advisory services, ICT and digitalisation, including e-Agriculture, aiming to create investment opportunities for this group. Meanwhile, FAO and ILO will design a model that incorporates the development of milk value chains through farmer participation in a school milk programme.

In the framework of GoA's 100 Villages Project, UN Women and FAO will be starting (inception phase in 2020) a three-year joint programme, GREAT, aiming to strengthen women's roles and contribution to rural development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core principle of leaving no one behind. Efforts in 2020 will entail providing models of change for rural communities, analysing data and stakeholders at the local level, exploring the potential of groups that can later be transformed into local action groups (LAGs), and will identify local interest groups that are able to effectively utilise and invest available funding to support their rural economy and tourism. The development of value chains, including short value chains, will be framed by the FAO guiding principles on developing sustainable food value chains, and by the development of gender-sensitive value chains. The intervention aims to contribute to and support government in implementation of the SDGs, in particular the targets for SDG 5 (reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, and to eliminate all forms of VAWG in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, and sexual and other types of exploitation) and SDG 8 (policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products, and strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all).

OUTPUT 3.4 - CULTURE

State institutions have inclusive and equitable policies to foster cultural and creative resources, improve access to cultural markets, improve gender balance in the tourism workforce, protect cultural diversity, and improve the management of cultural heritage as drivers and enablers for sustainable development



Implementation progress

In the last couple of years, Albanian institutions have increased their ability to monitor, safeguard, preserve, restore and protect the country's rich cultural heritage as a means for promoting sustainable development and economic growth. The country is aiming to tap the potential for cultural creativity and innovation, provide opportunities to stimulate growth, integrate more quickly with the EU and enhance its international image. All efforts and actions taken by government, specifically the Ministry of Culture, with the support of UNESCO over the years and during 2019, aim at achievement of the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, the targets of SDGs 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 and related key indicators 11.4.1, 13.3.2, 14.2.1, 14.5.1, to name a few.

Yet, the contribution of culture to development needs to be promoted further. Cultural heritage is mostly used as a tool and means to boost tourism development. Despite possessing a number of world heritage properties the country still needs to improve policies and mechanisms for their proper utilisation and long-term protection and thus provide benefits for its communities. The recently developed legal framework provides sufficient elements for proper management and promotion of culture and cultural heritage, but its implementation needs to be further enhanced. The main achievement in this area in 2019 are the UNESCO and partners¹³¹ efforts in

131. Ministry of Environment and of Culture of Albania and of North Macedonia and the municipalities of Pogradec, Ohrid and Struga.



SAFEGUARDING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAKE OHRID REGION BY STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN ALBANIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

the enhancing, safeguarding and sustainable development of the Lake Ohrid region by strengthening cooperation between Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia over the region's shared cultural and natural heritage.¹³² In this regard, following the 2018 official submission of the natural and cultural heritage of the part of the Lake Ohrid region that lies in Albania to the World Heritage Centre by the authorities of the Republic of Albania, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed the extension on the World Heritage List.

Challenges

Although progress has been made in the culture sec-

tor, Albania still lacks the design of an adequate legal framework and assurance of further capacity development actions to address emerging issues in the preservation of Albania's rich cultural heritage.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UNESCO's support will be focused towards targeting inclusive policies to foster cultural and creative industries, improve access to cultural markets, protect cultural diversity, and improve the management of cultural heritage as drivers and enablers for sustainable development that ensure equal participation, access and contribution to cultural life of all people, including vulnerable groups, and regardless of their gender. It will also support reporting on the role of culture as an enabler for all people to develop to their full potential within the SDG 2030 Agenda.

132. All implemented activities supported protection of the trans-boundary region of Lake Ohrid, one of the world's oldest lakes with one of the largest centres of endemism in Europe, by addressing threats against the natural and cultural heritage of the region, such as unplanned urban development, waste management issues, habitat alteration, lack of effective management, and destruction and depletion of natural resources.

OUTCOME 4

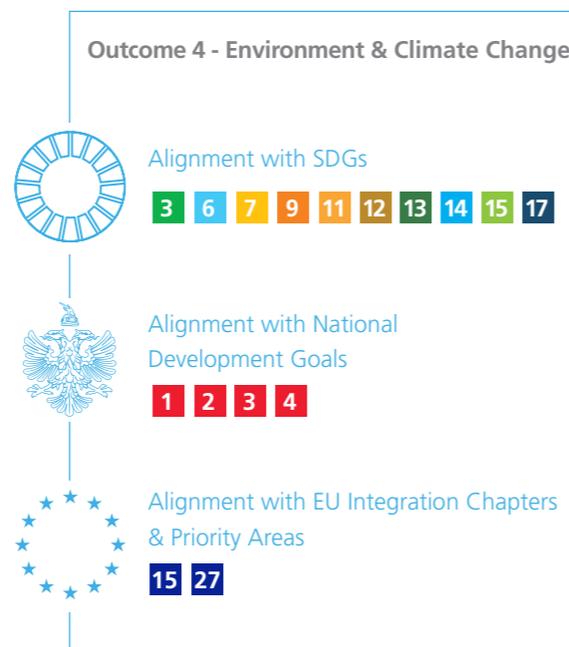
Environment and Climate Change

Government and non-government actors adopt and implement innovative, gender-sensitive national and local actions for environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

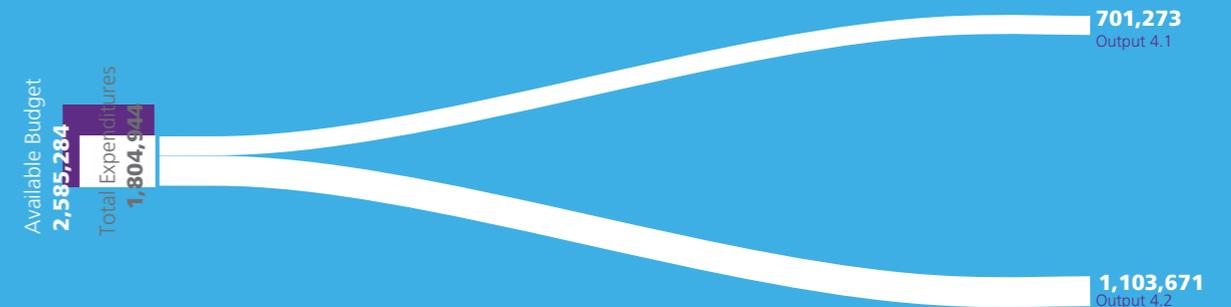
Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change—consists of two outputs focusing on 1) DRR and Climate Change, and 2) Natural Resources.

This outcome supports the government in achieving four priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Growth through sustainable resources and territorial development, 3) Investing in people and social cohesion, and 4) Good governance, democracy and rule of law. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17, and EU integration chapters and priority areas 15 and 27.

The total available budget for implementation of Outcome 4 in 2019 was USD 2.6 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Croatia, Germany, Italy and Norway, as well as the GEF and UN regional and global funds. The outcome delivery was 70 percent.



Outcome 4 delivery (USD million), 2019



Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that

all ten indicators are on track.

For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.

Indicator	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2019
Extent to which comprehensive measures - plans, strategies, policies, programmes and budgets - are being implemented to achieve low-emission and/or climate-resilient development objectives	34.22% RES in energy portfolio	34.6%
% of farmers accessing disaster early warning system	0%	10%
No. of sites, including World Heritage sites, with costed DRR plans/ interventions, that are gender-sensitive	0 (UNESCO) sites	3 (UNESCO) sites
Categories of Protected areas and Biosphere reserves with working, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms	0	1 biosphere reserve (Ohrid-Prespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve)
Presence and quality of the First Biennial Update Report of Albania to the UNFCCC that is gender sensitive.	0	1 First Biennial Update Report is being prepared, to be finalized in 2020.

OUTPUT 4.1 - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Scaled-up action on DRR, and climate change mitigation and adaptation across sector

OUTPUT 4.2 - NATURAL RESOURCES

Central and local institutions and communities are strengthened to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources



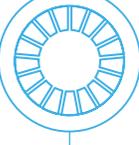
Contributing UN Agencies
UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNEP, UNESCO, FAO, WHO, UNECE, UN WOMEN



Contributing Partners
Governments of Croatia, Germany, Italy, and Norway, the GEF, UN regional and global funds



Financial Amount (USD)
1,804,944



Alignment with SDGs
Goals: 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17
Targets: 3.9, 3.d, 6.1, 7.1, 7.2, 9.1, 9.3, 11.2, 11.b, 12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 14.5, 14.a, 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 15.6, 15.9, 17.9, 17.14

Implementation progress

Albania's commitment to climate action and environmental protection has multiple motivations: its commitment to SDGs, requirements as part of EU accession, the importance of the environment to tourism and its economy including through electricity generation, and of course the genuine desire of the population to live in a healthier environment. As of July 2019, the country is the first in the region with an endorsed Strategy on Climate Change and related Action Plan, representing a general cross-cutting strategy with policy objectives and concrete actions that contribute to implementation of the Paris Agreement and the National Determined Contribution (NDC) target. Albania is preparing its First Biennial Update Report (BUR), and as part of this process intends to review the NDC in line with the EU Green Deal.

The maritime sector is rapidly increasing as a source for further economic development and international cooperation. Government has made progress with the maintenance and infrastructure of port facilities in line with the sector's development strategy, priorities stipulated in the government programme, the National Transport Plan, NSDI and MTBP. Adoption of the National Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2019–2023 opens new paths and creates opportunities for important decision making for tourism and eco-tourism development in the country. The protected areas extend to 504,826 ha, or 17.6 percent of Albanian territory. The Law on Civil Emergency Services (2019) provided for establishment of a new



UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, STUDENTS, CIVIL SOCIETY JOINED THE SOCIAL GOOD SUMMIT TAKING PLACE IN VLORA.

Agency on Civil Protection, currently with a very limited administrative capacity. Albania is not yet a participating State of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism and is not yet linked to the Common Emergency Communication and Information System.

Further to the support provided for preparation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, UNDP provided government with a position paper and technical advice in the frame of the 2019 Climate Action Summit. UNDP is supporting government in preparing BUR under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The support comprises updating several of the sections (National Circumstances, Institutional Arrangements, Constraints and Gaps, Financial and Technical Needs, Capacity Needs), as well as the time series for the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the years 2010–2016 for the sectors of energy, agriculture, forestry and land use, industrial processes and product use, waste and wastewater, involving qual-

ity assurance and quality control. Gender issues are also being mainstreamed into BUR through UNDP support. Efforts contribute towards achievement of SDG goal 13, indicator 13.2.1.

WHO support focused on strengthening the institutional capacities in DRR through (i) development of a Roadmap for the National Action Plan of Health Security; (ii) completion of an Albanian Strategic Risk Assessment with the main outcomes of preparation of a Public Health Risk Profile, Register of Risks, and Workplan for Emergency Preparedness Actions; (iii) formulation of a National Emergency Operation Plan of MoHSP, an Emergency Operation Plan for the Infectious Disease Department at Mother Teresa University Hospital Centre; (iv) assessment of IPH laboratories with regard to high threat pathogens; (v) a tabletop exercise on a flash floods scenario with 35 participants from various institutions, including MoHSP, IPH, GDOHS, NCEM, NHI, FSVI and MoARD. Efforts contribute towards achieve-

ment of SDG goal 13, indicator 13.1.2.

Multiple efforts by UN agencies focused on the management of water resources. The development of the Trans-boundary River Drin Strategic Action Programme, supported by UNDP, marks a milestone as the first strategic document for the water resources in the region, guiding the Drin Riparians to address the key trans-boundary issues.¹³³ UNESCO's focus during 2019 remained on improving DRR for UNESCO designated sites in Albania. In this regard, national DRR capacities were strengthened through (i) elaboration and adoption of a management plan for World Heritage property, specifically Natural Heritage and Cultural Heritage of Ohrid Region,¹³⁴ and (ii) development of a Hydrogeological Conceptual Model of the Skadar/Shkoder–Buna/Bojana Trans-boundary Aquifer System (Albania and Montenegro). The latter included elaboration of a conceptual model of the system, a risk assessment, identification of groundwater bodies, and development of an Aquifer Comprehensive Vulnerability Map (ACVM)¹³⁵ to be used as a tool for territorial planning and exploitation of the trans-boundary aquifer to protect groundwater quality. Moreover, a groundwater monitoring network and programme for the trans-boundary aquifer between Albania and Montenegro was developed based on Water Framework Directive (WFD) criteria. Accordingly, the main groundwater bodies (GWBs) set goals and will use the monitoring programme to identify priorities.

Lake Ohrid, a World Heritage site shared between North Macedonia and Albania, was the subject during 2019 of preparatory actions to determine whether or

not it might be added to the list of sites in danger. UNESCO supported preparations for a joint World Heritage Centre–ICOMOS–IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region property, to take place in January 2020, to address the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee (Decision 43 COM 8B.9) regarding the threats facing the cultural and natural attributes of the property. The Committee (with Decision 43 COM 7B.36) requested the State Parties submit by 1 February 2020 an updated report on the state of conservation of the property. The World Heritage Committee plans to consider at its 44th session in 2020 the potential or ascertained danger to its Outstanding Universal Value and its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

WHO continued its support to Albanian institutions towards achievement of the obligations of Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and provided technical support to MoHSP for piloting water safety plans in small water utilities in Petrele, Tirane.

Albania's first draft country programme to engage with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was developed with UNEP support. Actions included (i) a comprehensive desk review of Albania's climate, environment, waste management, and strategies of industry, agriculture and energy; (ii) two multi-stakeholder consultation meetings with an average participation of 33 participants; (iii) one workshop on GCF accreditation with participation of 22 multi-stakeholders; and (iv) an assessment report identifying knowledge, capacity gaps and needs of the National Focal Point Coordination Team. A brochure and leaflet containing information on GCF in Albania, as well as guidelines on how to engage with the Fund, were produced in 2019. Moreover, the National Designated Authority, MoTE, launched a call for proposals (2 September–14 October) to further strengthen the pipeline of projects that will be included in the Coun-

try Programme and widen the range of stakeholder involvement, ensuring a better consulted and inclusive programme formulation process. This is a step forward in contributing to the achievement of SDG goal 13, target 13.2 and indicator 13.2.1 making Albania one of the countries that is working towards the establishment of an integrated plan that increases the country's ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change as well as foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production. It also contributes significantly to SDG target 13.3 and indicator 13.3.2 with increased communication and strengthened institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions.

Environmental governance was the subject of additional actions by UNDP. The agency worked towards increased public participation and transparency by supporting the National Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System. Its establishment, also in line with EU legislation, resulted in twelve regional environment agencies and local government actors sharing protocols on monitoring and reporting on environmental indicators (biodiversity, land protection, air quality and climate change). A Land Degradation Neutrality Baseline for Albania and Soil Erosion Measurement Norms and Standards were prepared, through UNDP support, focusing on the multiple services that land provides, creating coherence among sustainable development policies and a clear direction for action.¹³⁶ Two MoUs were signed with Gjirokaster Polytechnic University,

UNDP and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, promoting triangular knowledge sharing and the experience of academia in environmental and climate data collection, processing and distribution with direct application at the local level. In addition, the first hackathon on environmental governance innovation, organised by UNDP, explored innovative solutions to improve Albania's environmental governance through (i) new and collaborative ways of working among the public, private and civic sectors to make the most of new digital technology opportunities, and (ii) capacity development of the Albanian government and agencies to promote sustainable development and counter the risks of climate change and environmental degradation.¹³⁷ In addition, UNECE's efforts towards evidence-based environmental governance and sustainable environmental policies in support of the 2030 Agenda in South-East Europe resulted in the finalisation of (i) a review of the implementation of the recommendations coming from Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) vis-à-vis the SDGs and targets, and (ii) a need assessment to determine and address gaps identified in the EPRs between the current conditions and the desired achievements of the relevant SDGs. The national validation process of these reports will be conducted in 2020.

UNDP's efforts to support Albania's alignment with EU requirements in the area of nature protection and biodiversity were focused on financing mechanisms to strengthen marine and coastal protected areas (MPAs) and resulted in several achievements during 2019, contributing to the achievement of SDG 14, indicators 14.C.1, 14.1.1, 14.5.1 and SDG 15, indicators 15.5.1 and 15.9.1:

- Maritime legislation compliance with EU requirements: A detailed gap analysis with a road map and timeline on approximation of the maritime

133. <https://mio-ecsd.org/the-drin-strategic-action-programme-a-stepping-stone-towards-the-sustainable-future-of-the-drin-river-basin/>

134. The management plan was developed under the framework of the joint EU–UNESCO trans-boundary project 'Towards strengthened governance of the shared trans-boundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region', which supported inscription of the Albanian part of the lake region onto the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019.

135. http://ihp-wins.unesco.org/layers/geonode:DRIN_Vertical_Vulnerability6

136. Setting a Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) target provides clear direction for action for the country's policymakers. While the LDN target-setting process is consistent with international guidelines (e.g. SDGs and the Rio Conventions), to be successful it must be aligned with national development priorities and build on national sustainable development processes. LDN falls under the thematic scope of the UNCCD, and developing cross-cutting actions that encompass the interests of the other Rio Conventions is vital for its success. Actions to achieve LDN can also help reach the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans established under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and become a core element of the Nationally Determined Contributions in the context of UNFCCC.

137. https://upload.latest.facebook.com/hashtag/environmentalhackathon?source=feed_text&epa=HASHTAG&__tn__=*NK-R



KARABURUN-SAZAN MARINE PARK, THE FIRST AND ONLY MARINE PROTECTED AREA OF ALBANIA.

sector legislation with the EU *acquis* and the Barcelona Convention was developed, and 22 pieces of legislation prepared. The General Maritime Directorate was supported for enhancing performance and financial sustainability.

- Sustainable tourism activities in Vlorë Bay and management of marine debris: A risk assessment of pollution from marine oil spills and hazardous pollution in ports and sea waters was developed, and two exercises on response measures and management of oil clean-up operation organised. Personal protection equipment was distributed in four ports. Recycling activities for used cooking oil in Vlorë involved the participation of 42 economic operators. For one year, through these recycling efforts, a total of 4,200 kg of such oil was collected and shipped to specialised recycling facilities.

- Piloting interventions in revenue generating mechanisms at four national parks: A national planning framework for the institutional development of the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) and a medium-term Financial Plan for the Protected Area System were developed and endorsed, feeding from the baseline assessments¹³⁸ and business plans prepared in the country's four main national parks: Dajti, Divjaka–Karavasta, Llogara, and Karaburun–Sazan. A mobile application was prepared for Android platforms and iOS for the national parks, with user access and materials provided on the MPA of Karaburun–Sazan website <https://www.karaburunsazanmpa.com/index.php/al/> with interfaces for tourism, culture and nature conservation, including tracks and

¹³⁸ Assessments of the biodiversity and natural and socio-economic values, financial analysis features and conservation status.

paths, photographs, maps, a questionnaire and feedback. Four information centres in the four main national parks became operational over the year and youth involvement was promoted through seasonal and other work. A model of practice for MPAs in Albania was attested to the priority management needs of the Vlorë Protected Area administration, including: area monitoring and surveying, training and capacity building, provisioning of supplies (i.e. logistic equipment, signalling and anchoring buoys, Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Centre), availing the administration with appropriate and adopted patrolling capacities, and enabling provision and operation of a new speedboat for surveying the MPA.

All the above efforts are contributing to the achievement of SDG 14 and 15. The management of the only Marine Park Karaburun–Sazan is improving as measured by the progress in the performance indicator, which has increased from 47 percent in 2015 to 53 percent in 2019. The number of tourists visiting the protected areas in 2019 increased to 916,660, or by 30 percent compared with 2018.

UNEP's implementation of its new project 'Promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Albania through Integrated Restoration of Ecosystems' resulted in several achievements in 2019, which contribute to the achievement of SDG Goal 15, targets 15.2 and 15.6, indicators 15.2.1 and 15.6.1: MoTE approval of a comprehensive assessment and legislative gap analysis for SLM, including recommendations for revision; identification of sub-legal acts for drafting (starting in 2020) in support of a new draft law on forestry; development of a report proposing the most adequate legal and economic instruments for stimulating investments in land productivity; finalisation of a capacity needs assessment at both central and local levels and training of fourteen officials from state and local governments in Austria on SLM practices; and organisation of three

successful awareness-raising campaigns on soil conservation and land degradation issues. An assessment is ongoing into current capacities and training needs of farmers for adoption of SLM practices, with 50 farming households selected to adopt SLM practices in Kolonja Municipality.

Management of genetic knowledge of Albania's resources also received support during 2019. UNDP assisted the preparation of a legal framework for access and benefit sharing (ABS) of genetic resources and a structure for establishment of an inter-sectoral committee along with a database to generate the information. In addition, UNDP supported development of recommendations on Traditional Knowledge protocols, prioritising the benefiting species. An information dissemination strategy and materials on ABS and traditional knowledge were produced. Moreover, cooperation between the Albanian Genebank and Tirana Agriculture University at Kamza is serving to enhance the national database for local and autochthonous plant genetic resources and evaluating resources of high economic potential for bioprospecting. A national mapping of genetic resources of plants and livestock was also developed.

FAO has been proactively engaged in activities aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change on agriculture, such as raising awareness and capacitating central and local institutions, extension services and farmer communities on climate-smart agriculture, integrated pest management and disaster risk management, including post-disaster needs assessment in agriculture. FAO efforts in 2019 for disaster risk reduction included the training of 15 experts from the Extension Service Sector, at MoARD and regional offices, on disaster risk prioritisation, emergency response preparedness and contingency planning for natural disasters affecting the agriculture sector. In addition, FAO is supporting improvements to the valuation of inland fisheries with regard to their contribution to livelihoods,

recreation and food security, while policymakers are being provided with reliable and comparable information on which to base decisions that affect fishery habitats.

UNIDO supported the drafting of a policy and regulatory financial support schemes and measures for establishing an enabling environment for a rapid uptake of bio-energy technologies production. Support included the preparation of guidelines for policymakers and guidance on how to develop quality infrastructure in support of national renewable energy technology markets and consultations with major stakeholders (policymakers, agro-processing lines in the olive-oil sector, and relevant agro-industrial associations). As a result of technical assistance provided to 40 enterprises to prepare feasibility studies and business plans, and to complete a grant application procedure, seven pilot enterprises received grant support and have installed several pieces of bio-energy equipment. More technology will be installed in 2020 with the aim of helping reduce the national GHG emissions by replacing fossil fuel and supporting the development of biomass energy and the biofuel sector. Enterprises will be less dependent upon fluctuating energy costs and will manage their waste in a sustainable manner. UNIDO's efforts in Albania have contributed to enhanced stakeholder cooperation and investments in clean energy technology, increased share of renewable energy and access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, set up the market environment that allows and promotes the use and replication of bio-energy technologies, leading to significant greenhouse gas emission reductions and help Albania in its transformation towards low carbon development – contribution to SDGs 7, 9, 13, targets 7.1, 7.2, 9.3, 13.2, indicators 7.1.2, 7.2.1 and 13.2.1.

Challenges

The key challenges affecting the sector relate to the continuing weak human and technical capacities to address an integrated policy on environment and climate change at both the central and the local level, while the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change needs to become functional.

Although the GCF National Designated Authority (NDA) has been established, there is no formal coordination mechanism for its effective engagement in the country, and no formal no-objection procedure exists. Whereas Albania has adopted numerous strategies and action plans in the last couple of years, there is a strong need for a comprehensive desk review in order to ensure coherence of the national approach to climate finance and prioritisation needs. Meanwhile, the country has not adopted a national programme or a similar prioritisation-based document.

The existing legislative framework does not support the integration of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) approaches into relevant laws and regulations, and SLM is not identified as a priority action in relevant plans and strategies. Local authorities responsible for land management are not capacitated to manage land resources, while financing mechanisms for investment in SLM practices are not functioning. Meanwhile, natural resource managers and farmers are unaware of the importance of soil conservation and of SLM approaches.

The new Law on Protected Areas and the respective by-laws are a step forward in support of government for an effective management of those areas. However, enforcement and control mechanisms need to be strengthened. Finally, sustained tourism activities and visitor centres require additional resources, both human and financial.

Way Ahead 2020–2021

UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNECE, FAO, UNIDO, WHO) will focus on building institutional capacity, including for data provision and knowledge to integrate the environment and climate considerations more fully into the national regulatory framework, and to develop new capacities and systems for implementation and compliance monitoring across the major sectors.

Key UNDP activities include: i) revitalisation of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change; ii) policy support and reporting in line with UNFCCC and EU requirements, in both climate change mitigation and adaptation areas, and revision of the First Albanian National Determined Contribution; iii) mainstreaming of gender issues into national policies on climate change; iv) national capacity assessment and national platform on DRR in line with EU and Sendai (Japan) requirements; v) alignment with EU requirements in the area of nature protection and biodiversity with focus on financing mechanisms for protected areas; vi) sustainable tourism activities in Vlorë Bay and management of marine debris; vii) piloting of interventions in revenue-generating mechanisms in four national parks; viii) support for actions towards EU horizontal legislation involving public participation in decision making through increased transparency in an indicator-based national environmental information and management system; and ix) further support for maritime sector compliance with EU requirements in a twinning and exchange with Norway.

UNEP's main focus for the SLM project will be application of SLM in Kolonja Municipality, with the drafting of local plans and identification of 120 ha of degraded sites, and supporting MoTE in drafting sub-legal acts deriving from the new draft law on forestry. With regard to GCF, two knowledge products on the Fund and Albania's involvement, responsibilities and possibilities will be developed, along with a web-based dissemination mechanism. The GCF country programme will be finalised.

FAO efforts in the area of DRR and Recovery will include restoring productive capacity for farmers, support for sustainable investments, and decreased vulnerability and increased resilience of communities and authorities to disasters. This will be completed through provision of FAO technical guidance on policy and agricultural statistics, and support in strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for agrifood production and climate change resilience. Regarding natural resources, FAO will continue its work towards improving sustainable management of inland fisheries through developing standardised methodologies and scientific cooperation, improving capacity for fisheries monitoring, training in data collection, formulation of fisheries management strategies and harmonised legislation to help policymakers and stakeholders, such as angler associations and fishing communities, to facilitate sustainable management of freshwater fisheries in Albania.

UNIDO will continue supporting the drafting of the policy and regulatory financial support schemes and measures for establishing an enabling environment for a rapid uptake of bio-energy technologies.

UNESCO's focus will be on supporting the organisation of a Reactive Monitoring mission, reviewing the overall state of conservation of the Natural and Cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region property, as well as making progress in implementation of the World Heritage Committee Decision 43 COM 8B.9, including its specific recommendations (paragraph 6 points a–n), and previous Committee decisions and mission recommendations.

WHO support will continue on strengthening the institutional capacities for DRR in the health and environment sectors, and towards achievement of the obligations of the Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

Supporting the Western Balkans collective leadership on reconciliation: building momentum and sustainability for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, RYCO

The Western Balkans RYCO and UN Albania have launched a partnership and joint project valued at USD 2.1 million, supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. This partnership is focused upon enhancing reconciliation in the WB6, as measured by increasing the embracing of diversity and reducing prejudice and discrimination. RYCO's establishment in and of itself illustrates the political will of leaders across the region to work on such issues. This inter-governmental initiative will work towards achieving its objectives by supporting youth activism, mobility and exchange, and social inclusion. Implementation of the joint programme began in the final quarter of 2018, with an intense period of preparation and coordination among UN agencies UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, and RYCO across the WB6.

In 2019, the partners focused on project start-up: setting up implementation mechanisms and mobilising human resources. A regional introductory meeting took place in January 2019 and the first steering committee meeting took place in April. A regional survey on youth peace perceptions was added as a new project component, to be followed by youth-led dialogue and advocacy.

RYCO also launched a second open call for proposals in 2019, with PBF resources of USD 600,000, and co-sharing EU funds of EUR 500,000, aiming to support regional CSOs and secondary schools in the areas of regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange, dealing with the past, inter-cultural dialogue and generally enabling an environment for regional

youth cooperation. The Office selected 44 of the submitted projects, most of which will start implementation in 2020.

After setting up the implementation mechanisms, work progressed in several directions during 2019, as follows:

- UNICEF developed a mapping of best practices in the region on school-based peacebuilding initiatives that served as a basis for the development of teacher training methodology on intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding, constructive remembrance and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. In parallel, UNICEF supported 23 schools in implementing this methodology, and also carrying out fundraising activities through the development of two materials: a school guide and a training manual on fundraising.
- UNFPA has been working on adapting the Y-Peer methodology (a youth networking initiative) towards peacebuilding. Western Balkan contexts are being analysed in parallel with the development of an outline of the training manual, based on youth peer-to-peer methodology. The training manual outline and draft are being widely consulted and are planned to be finalised within first half of 2020. Fifteen implementation workshops in the six WB contracting parties (minimum two workshops in each country) at the local level will focus on participation of hard-to-reach marginalised groups, reaching a total of 600 youth and 12 grassroots organizations inclusive of Roma/



Egyptians, LGBTI, young girls and women. This training tool and package will be expanded with innovative ideas and solutions for further use by the more vulnerable youths and by grassroots.¹⁴⁰

- RYCO concluded the recruitment processes for its central office staff based in Tirana, with one project leader, one project assistant, one M&E coordinator, one administrative and financial assistant, one communications assistant, as well as five local branch office assistants and one M&E advisor for the WB6 contracting parties. The project priority is now enhancement of RYCO staff and institutional capacities, informed by the recommendations of the micro-assessment report carried out by UNDP in August 2019. Through its second call for proposals, RYCO received support to consolidate the small grant

facility, and lessons learned from that round of open calls were implemented in the next call.

- An inception workshop for the newly added research component, bringing together RYCO, UN agencies, researchers, CSOs and youth from the WB6, took place in early October 2019. The workshop collected inputs for the design of the methodology and thematic areas of regional research into young people's perceptions on peace and security, and discussed questions on inclusive, youth-led research and advocacy. The survey's outline of methodology and trainings will be drafted and consulted among the stakeholders in early 2020, and finalised within the first quarter, followed by fieldwork, validation consultations with youth and dialogue events.

The project results are expected to be launched in regional events at the end of 2020.

139. <https://www.rycohb.org/?p=5425>

140. The team is working to revise the annual workplan to adapt to Covid19 situation and restrictions/lockdown. The target will be the same, but the methodology and tools might be revised, looking into adapting part of the workshops and trainings into online sessions, to the level possible and feasible.

UN in Albania immediate response to the earthquake

December 2019

On 26 November 2019, Albania experienced a powerful earthquake of magnitude 6.4, the strongest the country had experienced since 1979 and which killed 51 people. It is estimated that 220,000 people, some seven percent of the population, were affected by the quake. A post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) undertaken by the EU, UN, World Bank and Government of Albania appealed to, and received Euro 1.08 billion from, the international community to rebuild houses, schools, businesses and other vital infrastructure, with the pledges exceeding the support originally requested. Following the earthquake, the United Nations family immediately began mobilising and organising their support on the ground, as follows:

WHO (Country and Regional Office)

- Deployed four additional Health Emergency experts and repurposed the WHO Country Office staff.
- Supported national health authorities in assessing medical needs and repurposing facilities and personnel, focusing on primary health care, in order to:
- coordinate the response and recovery of the Health Sector
- map the actors working in health with regard to who does what, where and when
- conduct a Needs Assessment for the Emergency Medical Team field hospital to ensure continuity of health services
- procure emergency medical devices to equip three ambulances
- conduct Public and Risk Communication and Re-

source Mobilisation for MoHSP

- ensure the early warning and surveillance system is fully functional among the displaced population, including monitoring of water quality and hygiene conditions
- prepare the Health Sector Post-Disaster Need Assessment (HS-PDNA).

UNHCR

- Mobilised 400 m3 of Core Relief Items, donated through the General Directorate of State Reserves in close coordination with the Ministry of Defence, the General Civil Emergency Directorate and EU Civil Protection Team. Items included 171 family tents and their winterization kits, 12,304 sleeping bags, 9,990 rubber mats, 876 plastic mats, 370 tarpaulins, 13,800 blankets and 12,000 raincoats.

UNDP

- Deployed a team of international advisers for the post-disaster emergency response and early recovery efforts. It also provided broad support to the PDNA process, leading several sub-sectors and supporting the overall process alongside the EU.
- Applied the household and building damage assessment methodology and tool, in partnership with government, generating data for emergency relief and for planning the support for recovery. Government adopted the methodology and tool to their needs in order to undertake a building damage assessment in seven affected municipalities.



- Signed an agreement with the Albanian Institute of Statistics to run a mini Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) to assess the living conditions of affected citizens through innovative methodologies for data collection and analysis.

UNICEF

- Addressed critical child protection and education needs, with more than 1,400 children benefiting through six Child Friendly Spaces and four Temporary Learning Spaces, guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.
- Co-led Working Groups on Education, Child Protection and Humanitarian Cash Transfers.
- Provided technical assistance to MoESY for taking stock of the damage and losses faced by the

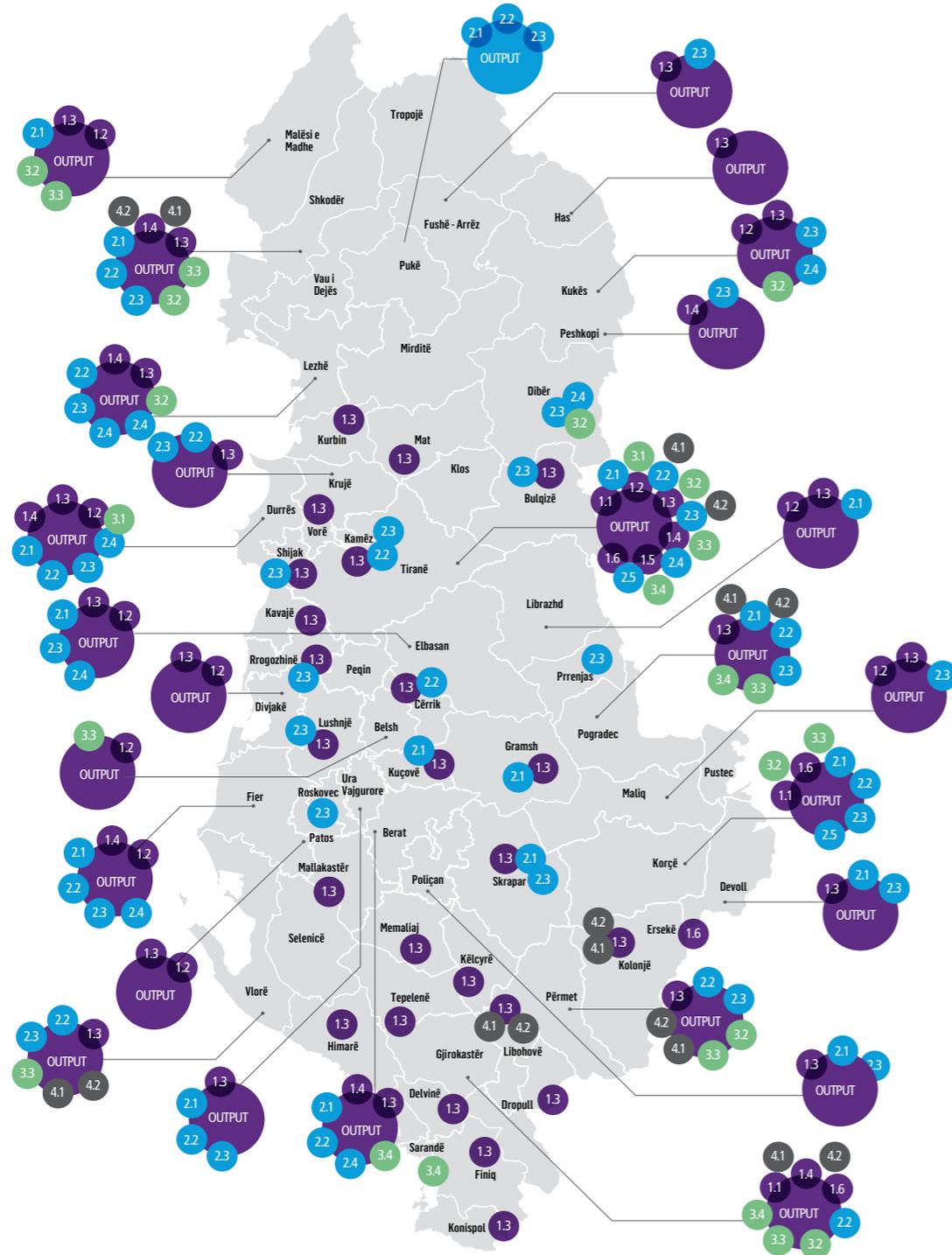
education sector and providing estimates of the recovery and reconstruction needs.

- Invested in building the capacity of national and local actors involved in the child protection response to improve their knowledge and skills in implementing and monitoring child protection standards, providing psychological first aid, and supporting assessment and determination of the child's best interests. More than 50 front line workers were trained in a process that will continue in 2020.

UN WOMEN

- Supported the PDNA training with a UN Women regional humanitarian specialist, helping international and national assessment teams understand the implications of mainstreaming gender across the PDNA exercise.

A GLIMPSE OF WHERE THE UN IS WORKING?



CHAPTER 4

THE UN DELIVERING AS ONE IN ALBANIA IN 2019



ONE PROGRAMME AND A COMMON BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK/ONE FUND

One Programme

Throughout the year, the Albanian government and the UN employed joint mechanisms at the strategic and technical levels to guide UN assistance. The Joint Executive Committee—co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Resident Coordinator, and comprising key line ministries and UN agencies—met in October 2019 to discuss achievement of the SDGs in the context of implementation of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021, and the allocation of SDG Acceleration funding to areas that promote multiplier SDG achievement results. The four Result (Outcome) Groups, aligned with the government's coordination structure and inclusive of development partners, met during the first half of the year to discuss and approve the rolling Joint Workplans for 2019–2020. The Workplans are published online: Governance and Rule of Law,¹⁴¹ Social Cohesion,¹⁴² Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture,¹⁴³ and Environment and Climate Change.¹⁴⁴ The UN supplemented these formal governance structures with standing UN coordination groups to interact with INSTAT and independent human rights institutions (e.g. People's Advocate).

The development of a United Nations Country Team Resource Mobilisation Strategy in 2019 and the establishment of a dedicated UNCT Resource Mobilisation Task Force has enabled increased joint Resource Mobilisation efforts resulting in successful joint programmes' fund-

ing, including sharing of pipeline plans across agencies, an indication of increased coordination and potential joint collaboration.

A key mechanism to support joint programming is the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, established by the UN and the Government. The Fund supports specific joint programmes, as well as the overall joint workplanning process. In 2019, the government contributed USD 0.5million to the Fund, the first tranche of a commitment of USD 6.5million for the remaining years of the PoCSD 2017–2021. The government contribution focuses on community social services, reintegration of repatriated children, disaster risk management, support for the earthquake PDNA, and employability enhancement. In 2019, the Fund received contributions from other sources, comprising continuing contributions or new contributions, or both, detailed under the section Common Budgetary Framework below.

Besides contributions to the Fund, individual UN agencies resource mobilisation efforts in 2019 have resulted in establishment of new bilateral collaboration and partnerships, such as the Swedish support for labour mediation (ILO), UK support for area-based programming in the north (UNDP) and for anti-trafficking (UNICEF), Italian planned support for rural women (UN Women and FAO), Austrian support for legal aid (UNDP), and health policy support from the Swiss government (WHO).

UNCT also won the first round of the Global Joint SDG Fund grants for social protection, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection building on the success of Leave No One Behind. It involves UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UN Women as implementing agencies, enlisting expertise from UNFPA, ILO and UNHCR.

Moreover, the partnership with RYCO continues to be strengthened through the second year of implementation (UN agencies in the WB—UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF—and RYCO) of a project financed by the Fund, engaging the UN in the WB6 and RYCO to enhance mutual trust and reconciliation across the region, by building the capacity of RYCO and aiding its ability to engage hard-to-reach youths and high-school pupils and teachers. (Details on 2019 implementation are provided at the end of Chapter 3.)

In 2019, UNCT undertook a System-wide Action Plan-Gender Equality Scorecard¹⁴⁵, assessing its gender mainstreaming practices and performance, aiming at ensuring accountability and improving UNCT performance. The assessment was organised around seven dimensions that address key gender equality and empowerment of women: planning; programming, monitoring and evaluation; partnerships; communications and advocacy; leadership and organisational culture; gender architecture and capacities; resources and results. The assessment showed that UNCT Albania meets the minimum standards in almost all dimensions. An action plan was drafted by the UN Gender Thematic Result Group for UNCT Albania to implement in 2020, aiming to further improve gender mainstreaming practices and performance, to exceed minimum standards in all seven dimensions.

During 2019, the UN in Albania became part of the UN INFO platform, a planning, monitoring and reporting system to track how the UN system at the country level supports local and central governments to deliver on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The system is currently available to UN personnel only. A public version of the system will be available in 2020, included in the new, revamped UNCT Albania website.

By the end of the year, following the major earthquake, government received immediate emergency support from UN agencies in Albania (UNDP, WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF). A UN Disaster Assistance Coordination team organised by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was attached to the support provided by the EU-led Civil Protection Team. Moreover, following the Prime Minister's request, the EU, UN and World Bank undertook a Post Disaster Needs Assessment, released on 5 February 2020 to support preparations of the Together for Albania Donor Conference.¹⁴⁶ A dedicated earthquake recovery window was established within the SDG Acceleration Fund, aiming to track all contributions for earthquake recovery aligned to PDNA and in collaboration with government to support the reconstruction and recovery efforts to 'build back better'. UN continued tirelessly (namely, UNDP-led, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UN Women) its joint efforts in the PDNA preparations, undertaken jointly by the government, EU, the United Nations and the World Bank. Based on the solid PDNA, UN entities are planning their coordinated contribution to recovery with government counterparts. As a result of successful resource mobilisation efforts, funding from Sweden (EUR 3 million), Netherlands (EUR 3 million), Finland (EUR 300,000) will be channelled in 2020 through the SDG Acceleration Fund to support UN efforts for post-earthquake recovery, including disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, while seeking to integrate humanitarian and development programming where feasible and appropriate to do so. The interest of other development partners, such as Poland and the EU, to join the joint SDG pooling mechanism are being explored in early 2020.

141. <https://www.un.org.al/what-we-do/governance-and-rule-law/joint-work-plan-and-activities>

142. <https://www.un.org.al/what-we-do/social-cohesion/joint-work-plan-and-activities>

143. <https://www.un.org.al/what-we-do/economic-growth-labour-and-agriculture/joint-work-plan-and-activities>

144. <https://www.un.org.al/what-we-do/environment-and-climate-change/joint-work-plan-and-activities>

145. <http://un.org.al/publications/unct-swap-scorecard-assessment-results-and-action-plan-united-nations-country-team>

146. On 17 February 2020, at the Together for Albania Donor Conference organised by the EU, the international community pledged more than EUR 1.15 billion in donations, grants and loans to help Albania recover from November's devastating earthquake. The amount is expected to cover the country's recovery needs after the strongest earthquake in decades increased the poverty level by 2.3 percent and reduced Albania's GDP by more than one percent.

The UN received a medal of honour from the Prime Minister in appreciation of the organisation’s rapid mobilisation and support efforts.¹⁴⁷

Efforts in the next year

Recovery: Earthquake and COVID-19—UN agencies will prioritise support to the government’s earthquake efforts as per the PDNA areas.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN will keep all programmes running as much as possible and undertake processes that look at how programming can be adjusted or expanded to assist with recovery. The focus on COVID-19 will be placed on its socio-economic impact upon the vulnerable population in the country and new programmes will be formulated to assist.

New Cooperation Framework 2022–2026—In 2020, UNCT Albania will embark on preparation of a new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Albania for the period 2022–2026. The Roadmap for the preparation of UNSDCF 2022–2026 has been prepared and approved by UNCT and government. The Evaluation and Management Response of the current PoCSD 2017–2021 and a Common Country Assessment will be conducted during the first half of 2020. The UNSDCF design and formulation, including a strategic planning workshop with government and partners in the country, as well as the funding of the cooperation framework, will be conducted during the second half of the year.

Penultimate year of implementation of the current PoCSD 2017–2021—Operationalisation of the PoCSD will take place through preparation of four outcome level JWPs for 2020–2021 closely aligned with government priorities, SDGs and the EU integration agenda. Joint Executive Committee (JEC) and Outcome Groups meetings will continue to be organised to allocate resources from the SDG Acceleration Fund and explore potential areas of collaboration. Implementation progress and results will be captured in the Annual Progress Reports, Mid-Year Review, and in the various contributing reports of donors. The joint group with INSTAT will coordinate effective support for strengthening data monitoring capacities while the group with the People’s Advocate will serve to strengthen the role of independent institutions to push forward the human resources agenda in the country.

Sub-regional cooperation—Accelerating across the UN system in the sub-region to enable joint work (requisite of the new UNSDCF) and the sharing of knowledge and practices, while the production, sharing and use of quality data will continue. Taking into consideration the good experience of the UN Peacebuilding Fund-supported RYCO, work in exploring regional application for eligibility to access the long-term window of the Fund will be explored in 2020. For this purpose, a sub-regional meeting will be hosted in February 2020 in Tirana to develop the concept further.

SDGs—Key priorities will include supporting government for finalisation of SDG target setting, Vision 2030 and formulation of the new National Strategy for Development and Integration 2020–2024 with SDGs integrated into the document and in the SDG Roadmap and Action Plan for Albania. In addition, government will be supported in bringing the SDGs to the local level. Work will continue with civil society, academia and Parliament to strengthen their engagement in SDGs and build capacities of INSTAT and line ministries on M&E to improve data availability and

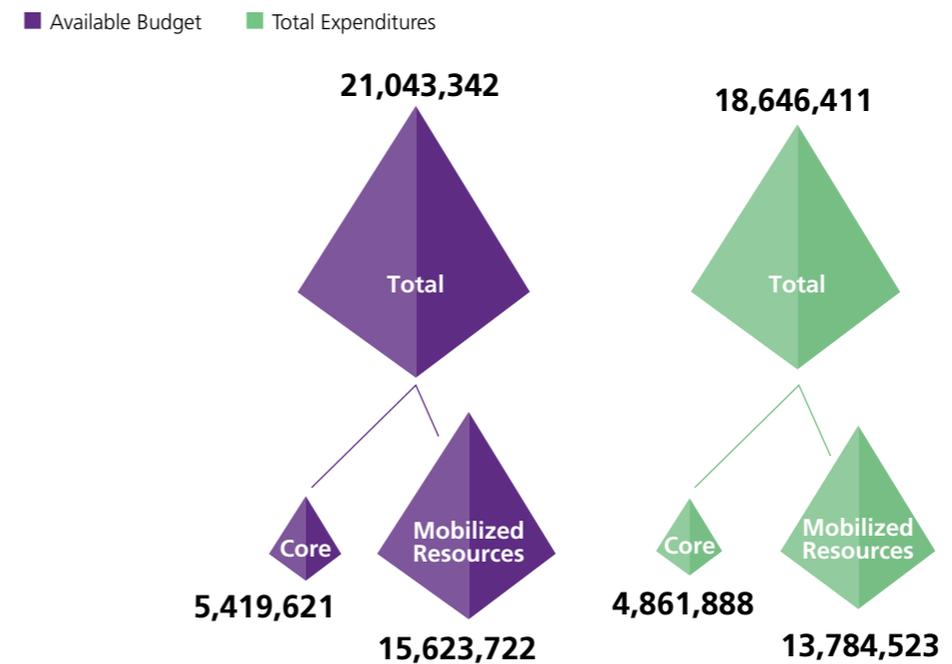
quality in the country. Support to EU integration structures on the negotiation process will be provided, aiming to insert the SDGs into the structures’ working agenda. UN will engage in the ICT Western Balkan Digital Summit to be held in spring 2020.

A Common Budgetary Framework, or One Fund-Albania SDG Acceleration Fund

The UN Albania costed results are presented in a single financial framework. Biannually, at mid and

end of year, UNCT Albania and implementing government partners provide information on progress made against the planned results and actual expenditures. The PoCSD for 2019 had an available budget of USD 21 million (Figure 1), with core resources of USD 5.4 million (26%) and mobilised resources of USD 15.6 million (74%). The large proportion of the non-core resources highlights the importance of local resource mobilisation. By year end, the programme had reached a delivery rate of 89 percent, with the balance carried over into 2020. For a financial overview of the 2019 total budget, including all sources of funding, see Annex C.

BUDGET AND DELIVERY (USD MILLION), JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2019

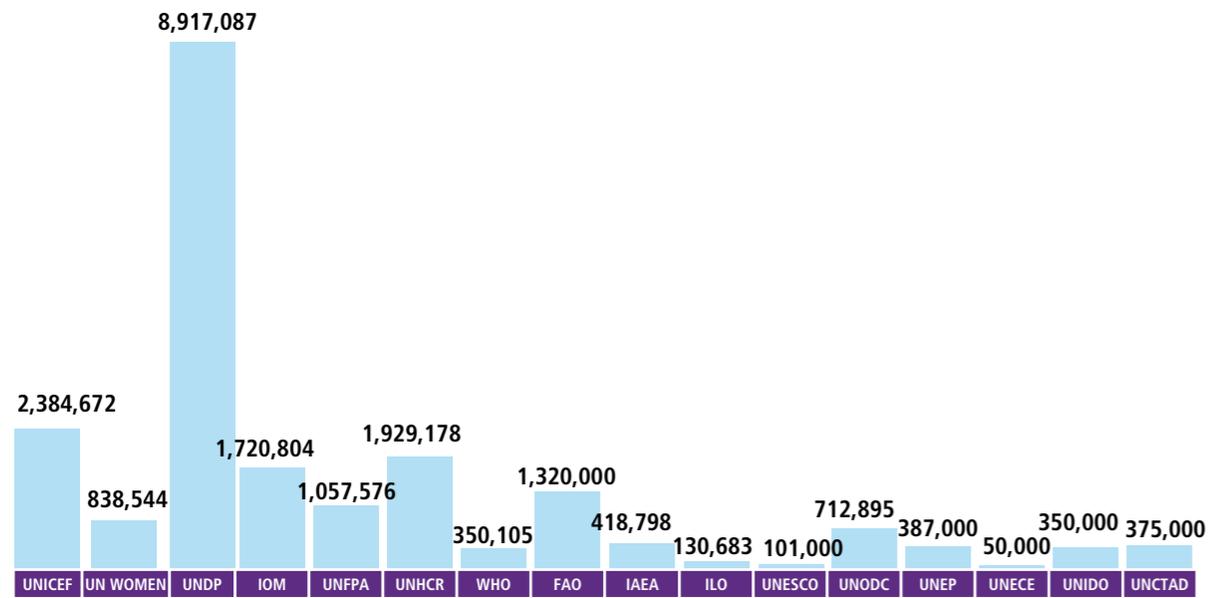


Sixteen UN agencies, eight resident and eight non-resident agencies (NRAs), contributed to PoCSD implementation in 2019. The available budget of the res-

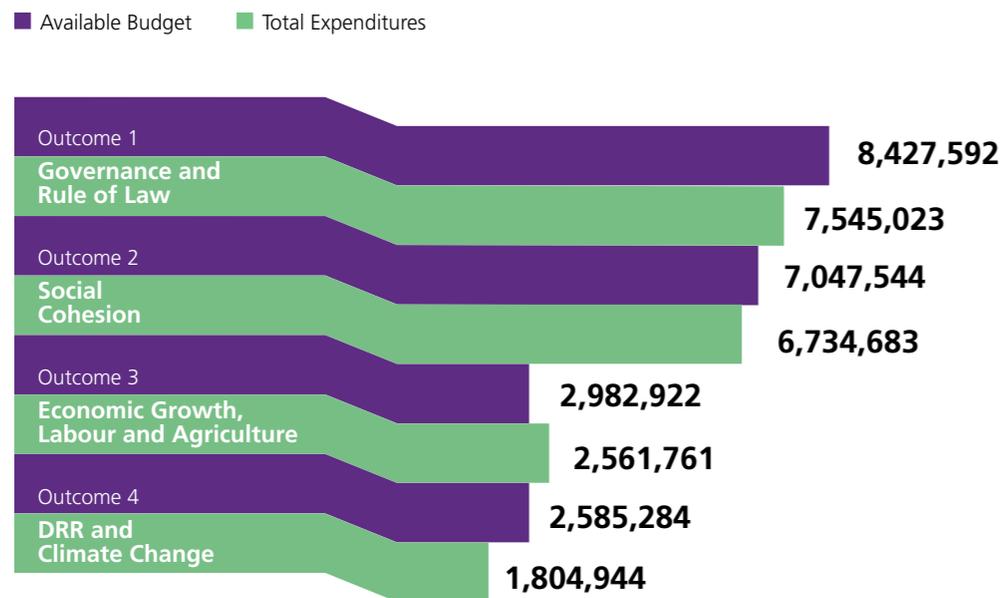
ident agencies made up 88 percent of the total UN Albania available budget, and that of the NRAs, twelve percent (Figure 2).

147. The certificate says: "In recognition of the work of the Search and Rescue unit of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team for extraordinary dedication in the search and rescue of lives of those affected by the earthquake, and for selflessness shown by all members of the unit in professionally helping the people in need, in extreme conditions."

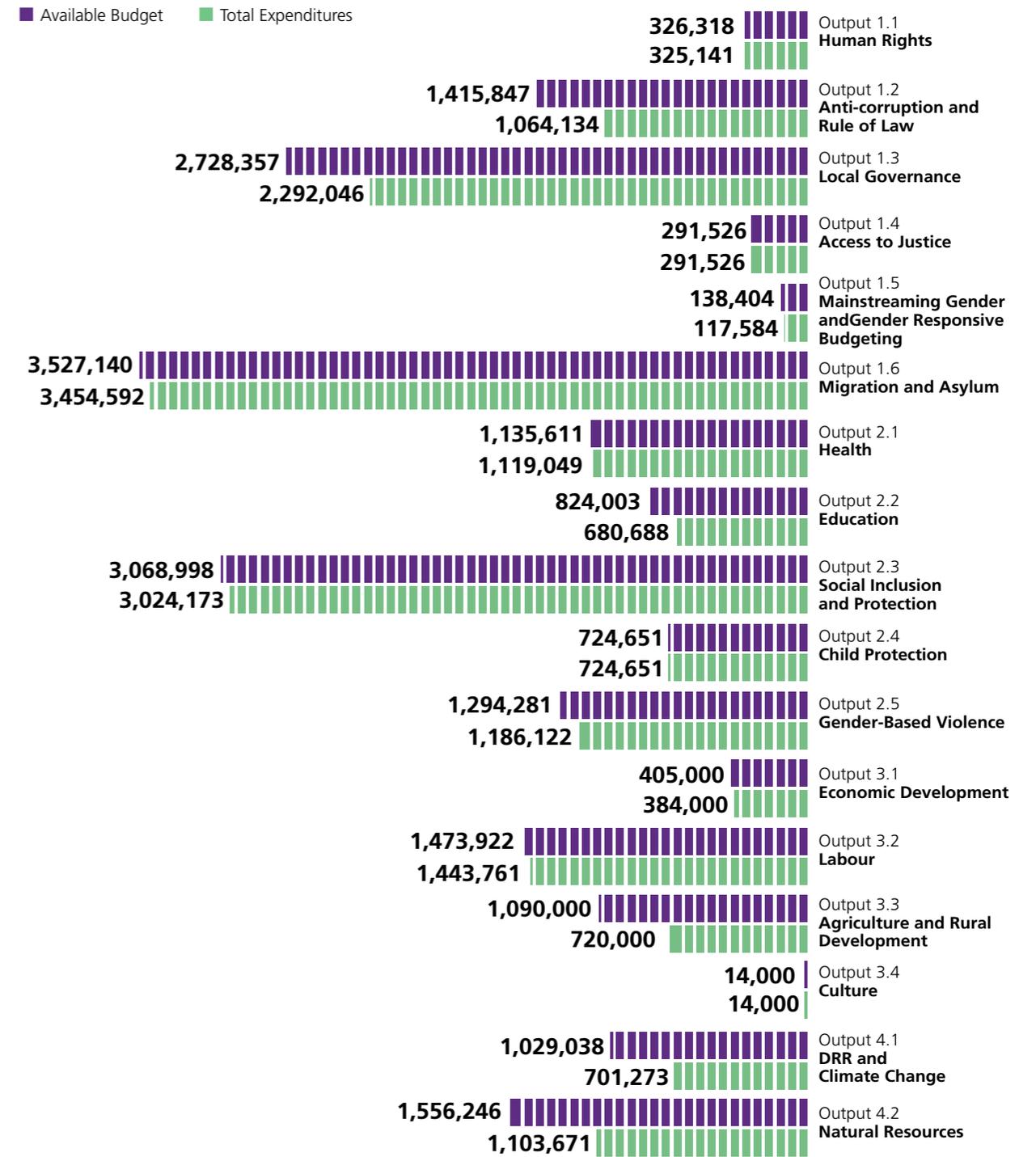
UN AGENCIES BUDGET (USD), 2019



OUTCOME DELIVERY (USD MILLION), 2019



OUTPUT DELIVERY (USD), 2019



At the Outcome level (Figure 3), Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law had the highest available budget (40%), followed by Outcome 2—Social Cohesion (33%), Outcome 3—Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture (14%), and Outcome 4—DRR and Climate Change (12%).

A closer look at the budget, at the Output level (Figure 4), shows the substantial work of the UN agencies in specific areas. The biggest outputs in terms of funding are, in decreasing order, Outputs 1.6 (Migration and Asylum), 2.3 (Social Inclusion and Protection), 1.3 (Local Governance) and 4.2 (Natural Resources), in line with increased efforts of the UN and development partners and the focus at the local level on migration and asylum issues. UN agencies efforts under these outputs have driven progress towards achieving SDGs 1, 5, 10, 13, 16 and 17, to name a few. Chapter 3 reports the relationship of each output work with the SDGs, providing also a few illustrative examples to links with SDG indicators.

The UN Albania joint One Fund is an important element of the mobilised resources (non-core) and contributes to greater UN coherence and efficiency. In 2018, the Albanian government and the UN re-launched the fund as the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund (Figure 5).¹⁴⁸

In 2019, this fund received contributions from four sources, comprising 20 percent of the UN Albania available budget for the year.

- USD 2.2 million from the Swiss Confederation (third tranche) in support of the efforts of UN agencies UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women towards social inclusion and protection needs and priorities in line with the project Leave no One Behind.

hind. The Swiss contribution is part of a four-year commitment, 2017–2020, of approximately USD 8 million.

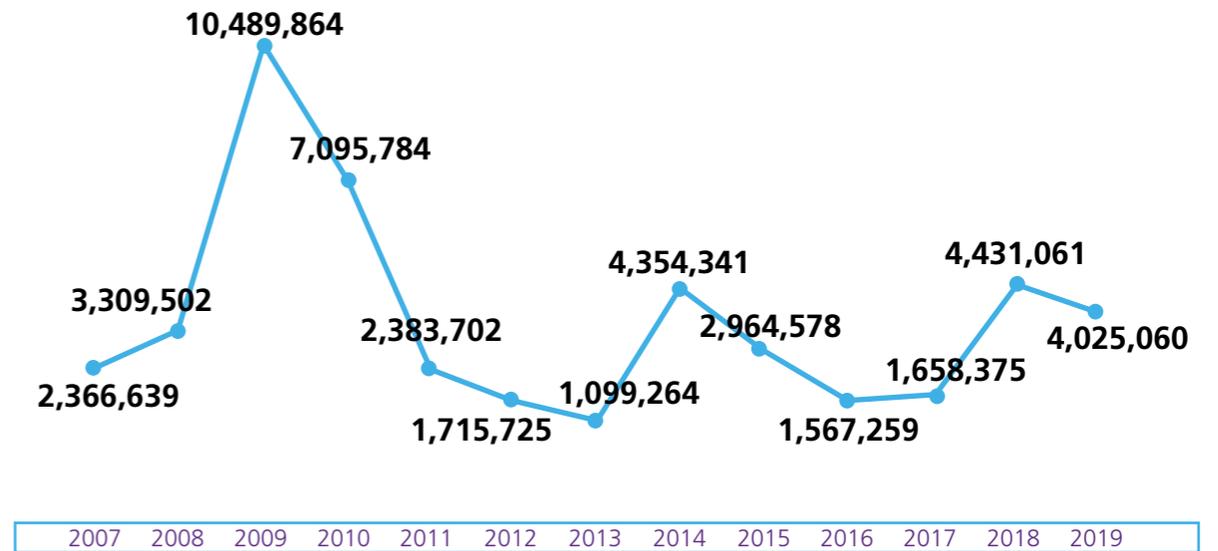
- USD 855,000 from the government of Norway for implementation of activities in accordance with the PoCSD 2017–2021, as indicated in the signed GoA–UN Joint Work Plans and in accordance with Norway’s development priorities for Albania: (i) Enhance reception conditions at borders and ensure systematic border monitoring, increasing state capacities to manage mixed migration flows, with focus on unaccompanied minors, women at risk, victims and survivors of violence; (ii) Institutional capacity building for NHRIs and support government in improving access to justice for vulnerable and marginalised groups; and (iii) An inclusive Green Economy, with focus on the environment, climate change and DRR.

- USD 500,000 from GoA (upon signature of Standard Administrative Arrangement, SAA) and commitment of USD 2 million annually for disbursement in 2020–2021. The 2019 allocation to key development areas was conducted and approved by the JEC in October to: Improve municipal social protection service delivery; Increase focus on child protection; DRR and Climate Change; and Capacity building for enhancing employability.

- USD 417,000 from the Embassy of Sweden (second tranche) in support of efforts of UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women towards gender needs and priorities of the country in line with the UN Joint Programme to End Violence against Women in Albania. The Swedish contribution comes from a finalised long-term support, 2019–2021, for gender work under PoCSD 2017–2021 to an amount of SEK 32 million (USD 3.5 million), materialised with the signing of an SAA in November 2018.

148. <https://www.un.org.al/news/government-albania-and-un-launch-sustainable-development-goals-acceleration-fund>

SDG ACCELERATION FUND (USD MILLION), 2007–2019



* "COHERENCE FUND" 2007-2017 & "SDG ACCELERATION FUND" 2018-2019

In addition to the contributing partners in the SDG Acceleration Fund, by the end of 2019, individual UN agencies implemented also contributions from 26 other partners and/or sources (Figure 6) at the country level, and regionally and globally.¹⁴⁹ In total, partners’ contributions amounted to USD 15 million by the end of 2019, with the largest being from the government of Switzerland, the EU, GEF, and the governments of Italy and Sweden.

Meanwhile, the collaboration among joint UN agencies in 2019 resulted in the development of the following joint projects, whose implementation will start in 2020 or 2021:

- A UN Women–FAO project, 2020–2021, focused on rural women’s capacity building to engage

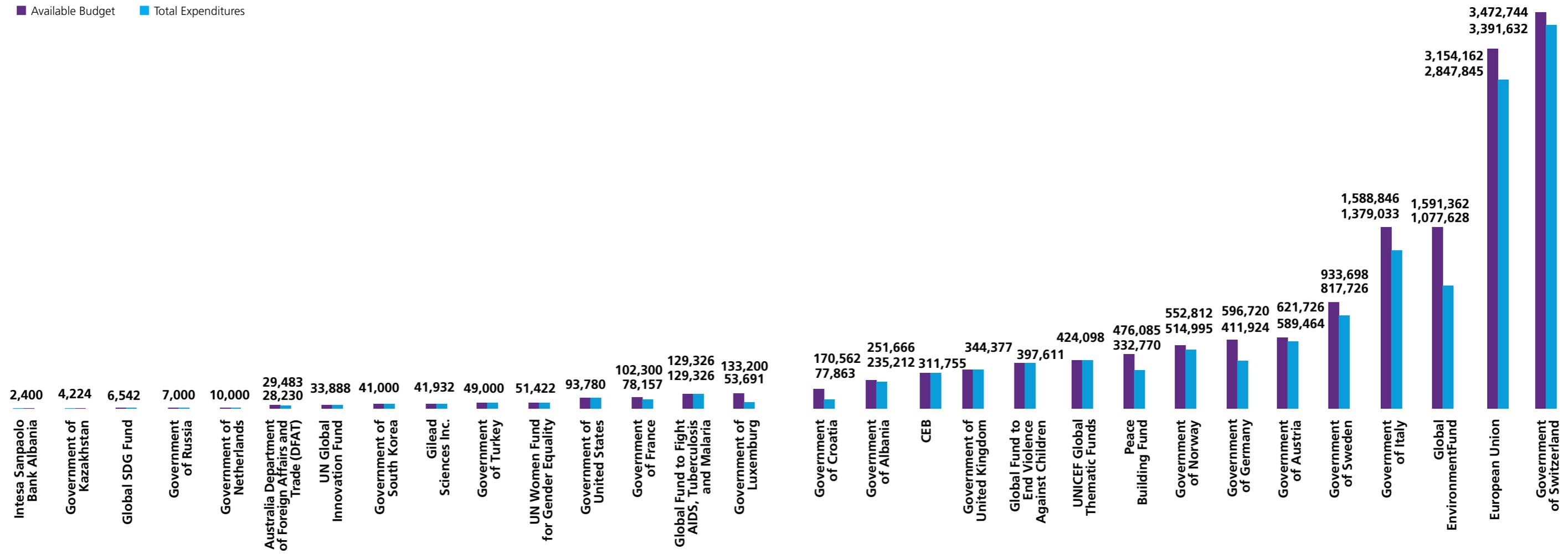
in tourism business development (GREAT programme), financed by the government of Italy to an amount of USD 1.35 million.

- A UNDP–UNICEF–WHO–UN Women project, 2020–2022, focused on improving social protection service delivery at the local level, financed by the Joint SDG Global Fund to an amount of USD 1.5 million. The project will enlist expertise from UNFPA, ILO and UNHCR.
- Another effort in the pipeline including EU support for gender equality work, for which a project document will be developed by UN Women and UNFPA in 2020.

149. Partners contributions implemented in 2019 consisted of new resources raised in 2019 and/or resources raised in earlier year and carried over for implementation in 2019.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY FUNDING SOURCE (USD), 2019

■ Available Budget ■ Total Expenditures



Coordinating UN Assistance and UN Reform

On 1 January, 2019, the reform of the United Nations Development System went into effect worldwide, guided by resolution 72/279, dated May 2018, mandating the system to strengthen its capabilities and coordination systems to support the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development.¹⁵⁰ The reform created a full-time UN Resident Coordinator, focused on coordination, advocacy and dialogue with partners, managed by the UN Secretariat in New York. Restructuring is just the first step, with the longer term objective set on

150. The resolution restructures the UN development system by creation of a full-time UN Resident Coordinator focused on coordination, advocacy and dialogue with partners, managed by the UN Secretariat in New York, while empowering UNDP with its own Resident Representative.

more efficient business operations and inter-operability, continuously improving coordination, whole-of-UN accountability to government and partners, increased use of pooled funding mechanisms and increased attention to regional links for sustainable development, among other measures. The government and its development partners have been continuously briefed in various fora with updates on the UN reform.

UNCT organised joint engagements with key development partners in 2019 and is keen to continue this approach in 2020. For example, in October 2019, it exchanged views with Sida on development of the results strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with the Western Balkans 2021–2027 and the identification of areas of common interest to pursue in the coming period. Furthermore, UN Albania used the donor coordination fora, Donor Technical Secretariat,

development and integration partners, as well bilateral engagement with the EU Delegation and EU member states to articulate common positioning on the synergies established between the EU and the SDG agenda. UNCT's annual retreat increased interaction with various partners on EU integration and the SDGs. In parallel, UN continued active engagement and leadership of the thematic and sector working groups, e.g. on agriculture, health and social inclusion.

Coordination efforts culminated in organising UN humanitarian and response efforts in response to the earthquake emergency in Albania on 26 November 2020 at 6.4 Richter magnitude, the strongest the country had experienced since 1979 and that killed 51 people. This was followed by joint coordinated efforts in the PDNA preparations, undertaken jointly by the government, the EU, the UN and the World Bank. Based on the solid PDNA, effective coordination enabled significant partners' engagement for the joint post-earthquake recovery support by UN agencies.

In view of the UN reform, cooperation at the regional level is taking on an increased dimension. This is demonstrated through participation of resident coordinators from the region in UNCT Albania's annual retreat, preparation of a workshop on regional application for eligibility to access the long-term window of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, to be organised in February in Tirana.

Part of the UN reform involves strengthening the capacity of the Resident Coordinator's Office, including through the recruitment of a Strategic Planner and Head of Office, a Results Monitoring and Reporting Officer, a full-time Communications Officer, an international Economist and a Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation Officer. The last two posts will be deployed in 2020.

Operating as One

The role of the UN Operations Management Group (OMT) has evolved during the UN reform in support of harmonised and common business practices. OMT continues to demonstrate readiness towards achieving higher milestones in respect of harmonised business practices—common procurement, services, recruitment, ICT, among others—and to search for efficiencies through economies of scale and collective bargaining on behalf of all participating UN agencies and revisiting long-term agreements (LTAs), to explore further possibilities of cost optimisation.

To increase cost effectiveness and efficiency of common premises, eight UN agencies (ILO, UNDP, UN, UNDSS, UNFPA, UNEP, UNHCR and UNODC) residing in UN House signed an MoU on common premises, while an online booking system has been created for the conference rooms on the second floor of UN House. UNICEF and WHO are based in the same building, with separate leases and sharing some costs, though they have not signed a formal MoU. The agencies residing entirely outside of UN House are IOM, FAO and UN Women. Due consideration is given to the safety of the premises, access to security and the environment. Pro-environmental efforts include LED lighting, motion sensors lighting, paper recycling, energy consumption monitoring, office bicycles and increasing UN staff awareness. In view of the continuous efforts of UNCT/OMT to improve the quality of service, as well as explore possibilities of savings, the share of the UN agencies' part of UN House was reduced. This was made possible by redistribution of office space for some agencies and maximising the usage of common areas. Thus, a considerable reduction (around USD 20,000 in total) in the common costs of UN House was achieved.

The OMT continues to search for efficiencies through economies of scale and collective bargaining on behalf of all participating agencies, while revisiting in-

ter-agency LTAs for further possibilities of cost optimisation. By the end of 2019, the UN agencies in Albania were benefiting from 19 LTAs covering thirteen service lines. Event management remained the largest part of procurement volumes (49%), and ensured approximately USD 31,000 in savings in 2019 due to reduced transaction costs, staff time and prices. Several reviews were conducted, including daily subsistence allowance review and an interim salary survey. The process for establishment of a roster of individual professionals to provide translation, interpretation and editing services was launched in 2019, and successfully finalised at the beginning of 2020, while the process for establishment of a roster of consultants in some communication areas will be finalised in 2020. The total joint amount of disbursement through these agreements in 2019 was USD 889,670, and estimated savings from their use came about as a result of reduced transaction costs, staff time and prices from economies of scale (larger procurement volumes).

The savings from Common Services and Business Practices are presently too insignificant to be transferred to programming. However, they represent a large change in mindset, illustrating the intention of the UN to coordinate itself better internally and control costs through a constant search for practical and commercially feasible improvements in support of programmes.

The aim of the use of common services in Albania as indicated by OMT is to promote efficiencies in UN procurement, maximise the use of funds in support of differing agency mandates and operations, and locally acquire commonly procured commodities and services more effectively and efficiently through collaboration, thereby reducing transaction costs and improving value for money. UN in Albania has undertaken a considerable amount of work to identify the potential tangible and intangible benefits of common services, including (i) reduction in parallel processes and transaction costs, (ii) increased value for money through improved planning,

requirements gathering, bulk discounts and better negotiation power, (iii) faster programme implementation, and (iv) better procurement risk management.

Albania was one of the countries selected for a common back-office country study and consultation in the context of advancing common business operations in the UNCTs. Analytical data on expenditure, personnel numbers, time allocation and quantitative indicators were provided by each agency for six back-office service areas: administration, finance, human resources, ICT, logistics and procurement. The data collection was followed by a visit by the BIG project team to Albania in July 2019, and preparation of a country report that fed into the Common Back Office Synthesis Report.

In view of the November earthquake, additional measures were taken to ensure that the office is structurally stable, with a structural and seismic assessment conducted for UN House. The owner was also requested to take structural reinforcement measures.

In view of the UN reform, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) has been provided with all required operational support—office refurbishment, procurement of furniture and IT equipment—in addition to day-to-day business.

Following the latest developments in the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2017–2021 and launch of the BOS online platform, UNDP Operations Manager attended a ToT in Istanbul to learn more of the transition of BOS to the new platform. The Operations Manager had already conducted a training with local OMT members on the new guidelines, to be able to timely complete the transition to the new platform. Some of the steps required to ensure the transition of the BOS to the new platform are already initiated.

The Memorandum of Agreement for the Medical Response to Diplomatic Corps (MRDC) was extended by

twelve months to enable the continuation and facilitation of health services to all UN staff members and their recognised dependents.

The UN in Albania is determined to comply fully with the requirements of the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework, with increased focus on risk management and capacity building, as well as costing for joint assurance activities to serve as a benchmark in measuring efficiency gains in HACT implementation. Implementation of the framework was guided by a joint HACT working group, established in 2018 with staff from UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women.

Communicating as One

Communications at UN Albania were further strengthened during 2019. The UNCT Communication Group was expanded during the year by full participation of all 16 resident and non-resident agencies.

To maximise reach, UN Albania harnessed the potential of both traditional channels and new media or digital communication channels, while recognising that the dividing line between these is already fading. Traditional communication was focused on announcements and interviews in print and audio-visual media, public activities, meetings and dialogues with audiences, speeches by UNRC and UNCT representatives during events, publication of the quarterly *Delivering for Development* newsletter and the UN Albania website. In the new media space, the communications exploited the vast potential of presence on social media networks, namely on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Because Facebook is the most widely used social media, the UN Communications group prioritised this

channel for Albanian language products. The frequency of publications increased to match the information demand and ensure better targeting of all segments of the audience. Twitter was attuned to ensuring better networking with programme partners and stakeholders and continues to be provided in English. This approach proved effective, with an audience growth of more than 20 percent for both channels and an organic reaction increase of more than 50 percent (Facebook).

Raising awareness and stimulating action on the SDGs was aided by systematic planning of communication efforts, with each month focused on one SDG, following a global strategy led by the UN Department of Global Communication. Content sharing platforms such as *Trello* and utilisation of digital media tools such as hashtags and tagging were used to enhance cross-agency cooperation and ensure delivery of consistent and well-targeted messages to the audience throughout the year. All communications followed UN and SDG branding guidelines.

In September, UN Agencies in Albania celebrated the 4th anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs through the traditional awareness-raising activity SDG Week with a wide reach across the country. A dedicated SDG Day had the UN Albania team transfer to the city of Gjirokaster to communicate and interact with local partners and development partners from Italy and advocate on issues of Gender Equality, Child Protection, Quality Education and Leave No One Behind. A meeting at the town hall brought together the mayor, members of the municipal council and representatives from civil society, and served as a platform for exchange of ideas, establishment of partnerships, engagement of communities, fostering of public support and promotion of actions for achievement of the Goals at the local level. Meanwhile, more school pupils were introduced to the Goals through the World's Largest Lesson.

Progress with PoCSD was communicated through the annual progress report, which was published in May 2019, and shared with all partners and the public electronically via email, on the website and in social media. The report's audience exceeded 90,000 impressions by the first quarter following publication. Also, the quarterly newsletters showcased PoCSD activities of UN agencies in Albania. The Resident Coordinator conveyed to the public progress of the programme through five exclusive interviews with major television channels and newspapers, and in more than 20 interviews and speeches at key events. The four components or outcomes of the programme were presented to the general public in four informative videos that were widely distributed on all digital channels.

The 74th anniversary of the UN was organised in the form of interaction among all stakeholders who can influence action on the climate emergency. It was run as an outdoor outreach event designed to serve as a model for climate action. The event was hailed as a smart call to illustrate that everyone has the responsi-

bility and also the opportunity to do something about the environment and climate. The event was followed by numerous publications in the local media focusing on an immediate increase in awareness to act on climate. A special video was prepared for the occasion in which members of the public from all walks of life, UNRC and the Prime Minister clearly expressed the importance of acting quickly on climate.

The UNCT response to the devastating earthquake of 26 November was supported by the UNCT communication team working in coordination with government, the EU and the World Bank to provide accurate and timely updates on the response through joint press releases.

Annex A: Progress against PoCSDresults framework

ON TRACK | PARTIALLY ON TRACK | NO PROGRESS | NO DATA

Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law State and civil society organisations perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards					
National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas: 5, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24 SDGs: 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17					
Participating Agencies	Indicator	Baseline 2016	Outcome Target (2021) Output Target (2019)	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019
UNFPA UN WOMEN UNICEF UNDP UNODC IOM UNHCR UNESCO	% women in government ministerial positions	MPs, 21% Municipal Councillors, 35% Public Sector, 44.6%	MPs, 30% Municipal Councillors, 50% Public Sector, no less than 30%	Parliament Central Elections Commission INSTAT Women and Men annual publication	MPs, 29% Municipal Councillors, 43.61% Public Sector, 57%
	Annual rating of democratic change in Albania (composite)	4.14/7	3.9	https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit	Albania Report for 2019 not yet published 4.11 (2018 report)
	Perceptions of performance of public institutions	Central Elections Commission (CEC), 8% Parliament, 10% Government, 14% Local Government, 13%	CEC, 20% Parliament, 25% Government, 35% Local Government, 50%	Periodic citizen survey undertaken in framework of Open Government Partnership	CEC, 11% Parliament, 10% Government, 18% Local Government, 21% (Trust in Governance Report 2020 for year 2019)
	Rate of children in detention (per 100,000 population of age 14–17 years)	179	105	Ministry of Justice Records	42 Significant improvement of this indicator demonstrates early achievement of Outcome target, not only for 2019 but also for 2021 (end of UN–GoA Programme for Sustainable Development)
	Out of all child-related valid complaints, proportion of complaints for which a remedial action was taken by the People's Advocate, annually	65% (2014): 65 out of 100 cases	5% increase, annually	People's Advocate Office records	26%: 20 out of 129 cases

Output 1.1 Human Rights—Constitutional, ministerial and independent mechanisms are reinforced to identify and report human rights violations and enable evidence-based policy making and response

UNFPA UN WOMEN UNICEF UNDP UNHCR IOM	Number of networks of CSOs that monitor and prepare shadow reports or submissions on implementation of international instruments on women's rights and gender-based violence	0	1	Stakeholder reports	2
	Number of monitoring reports on refugee and migrant rights situation in the country	0	2	Physical monitoring	2
	Number of national reports monitoring implementation of international instruments with gender equality indicators, age and sex-disaggregated data and analyses	0	At least 3 (UPR and CEDAW mid-term review, Beijing+25 national report)	National Gov. Institutions' websites	5 Official CRC Report of Albania submitted to CRC Committee Mid-term Monitoring Report of Agenda for Children UPR Report submitted Beijing+25 national report submitted CEDAW follow up submitted
	Percentage of population who believe women are capable political leaders	46% of population believe that women do not compare favourably with men for leadership qualities (31% women, 58% men)	65% of population believe that women are capable political leaders	Project data, surveys Reports produced by Ombudsman Office, MoI, MoHSP	Results of Freedom of Vote and Family Voting survey 2017 (UN WOMEN, IDRA) 80% of respondents agree with the statement that "women and young women have the required capacities to decide on political issues" 47% of respondents (55% of men; 40% of women) "strongly" or "somewhat" agree than men are better political leaders than women.
	Number of border monitoring reports	1	12	Project data	12
	Amendments to the legal and administrative framework linked to statelessness	0	6	Project data	6
	Number of civil registrars and pro-bono lawyers trained in prevention and reduction of statelessness	143	300	Project data	10 focus groups: 240 persons

Output 1.2 Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law—National public administration has greater capacity to improve access to information, address corruption and organised crime, and engage CSOs and media in efforts to strengthen monitoring of reform efforts

UNDP UNESCO UNODC IOM UNFPA	Improved sex disaggregated database on potential victims of trafficking (PVoT) and collection of sex disaggregated data with regards to VoT	Existing VoT database	Database populated, and sex-disaggregated data available	Annual report of Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (ONAC)	Database populated and sex-disaggregated data available According to data from Responsible Authority and ONAC, during period January–December 2019 a total of 92 VoT or Potential PVoT were identified: 7 VoT, 85 PVoT; 33 adults, 59 children; 22 male, 70 female; 87 Albanians, 5 foreigners
	Number of ADISA CSCs and LGU colocations for customer-care service delivery (cumulative)	1	16	Physical, MIPA/ADISA Project data	12
	Number of legal and policy measures and operational tools defined and activated against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects	0	4: improved database, sub-law adopted, bilateral agreements, national platform	UN and Partners Reports Project data	4: database, new law, bilateral agreements, national platform Achievement of the target is in process and expected to be reached fully by 2021
	Number of events and activities to strengthen media accountability and Media and Information Literacy in Albania	N/A	At least 3 events or activities	Platforms establishment documents; UN & platform reports	3 events or activities
	Number of seizures by PCU	60%	80%	Report on seizures produced	80%

Output 1.3 Local Governance—Local Government Units (LGUs) are able to deliver equitable, quality services and strengthen influence of citizens in decisionmaking

UNDP UNFPA	Number of LGUs operating One-Stop-Shops for service delivery	3	61	Physical, LGUs; Project reports	33
	Benchmarking System established at national level and 61 municipalities use it	System not in place; 0 municipalities using it	System in place; 61 municipalities using it	Project data	1 Roadmap consulted and ready, testing and dissemination
	Number of municipal action plans that have a budget line for youth, including education and SRH	0	12	Project data	9
	61 municipalities have in place a physical archiving system and have increased their capacities, legal knowledge and skills in physical archiving	0	61	Project report & data General Directorate of Archives LGUs	61
	Number of municipalities with web pages meeting transparency legal requirements	21	32	Commissioner for the Right to Information Platform establishment documents	61 (13 from STAR2)
	Number of municipalities implementing the transparency performance measurement system	0	61	Data from online platform vendime.al Project assessment reports	17 (adopted new transparency programme approved by Commissioner)
	Number of municipalities publishing Council Decisions online	27	61	Data from online platform vendime.al Project assessment reports	61

Output 1.4 Access to Justice—Children and vulnerable adults and groups have equitable access to a friendlier justice system, and juvenile justice is administered to international standards

UNICEF UNDP	Existence of legislation that recognises a child's right to be heard in civil and administrative proceedings that affect them (in line with Article 12 of the CRC)	1 Law (Family Code)	2 Laws (Family Code; Child Rights and Protection Law) Secondary legislation on basis and for implementation of Child Rights and Protection Law (guaranteeing right of child to be heard) is drafted	Parliament website Official Gazette Ministry of Justice website (Justice for Children rubric)	4 laws Almost all DCMs on basis and for implementation of Criminal Justice for Children Code (developed with UNICEF support) approved during 2019, and implementation started. Legal framework in Albania guarantees 'the right of the child to be heard', whether in conflict or in contact with the law. Similarly, Child Rights and Protection Law sub-legislation has been approved.
	Establishing Free Legal Aid Centres at District Court level to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice for the most vulnerable persons	0	2	Ministry of Justice annual report	2 new FLA Centres

Output 1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender-Responsive Budgeting—State institutions have capacities and mechanisms to mainstream gender in policy-making and planning processes

UN WOMEN UNDP UNICEF UNFPA	Number of GoA draft policies, strategies and plans engendered	2 (NSDI, NSGE)	2	Annual reports	3 Public Finance Management Strategy; National Strategy on Social Protection; Action Plan of National Social Protection Strategy updated and expanded to 2022
	Extent of gender mainstreaming in the central budgeting process (MTBP)	24 MTBPs	11 line ministries, 40 MTBPs	Policy document Action Plans	38 MTBPs (50% of budgetary programmes) 11 Line ministries and 2 oversight institutions
	Number of fiscal laws, by-laws and policies reflecting compliance with gender-responsive budgeting	2 OBL, GEL	4	Draft laws By-laws	(4) Annual Budget standard instructions for the planning and monitoring phase, at both central and local level
	A consolidated monitoring system for data collection and dissemination for service delivery	Existence of unconsolidated monitoring system	Consolidated monitoring system in place 1 monitoring framework of NSGE; 2 templates of onset data collection	National Statistical reports and bulletins	Publication Women and Men 2019 has been finalised. It includes all indicators reflected on Albanian national monitoring frameworks and international reporting obligations on gender equality and status of women; includes long list of gender indicators harmonized with gender-related indicators of SDGs, Gender indicators proposed in NSDI II 2015–2020, gender indicators of monitoring framework of National Gender Strategy 2016–2020. Statistical framework on Child Rights and Protection developed, consulted and approved through DCM Online platform http://www.instat.gov.al/publikimi and video on publication produced and launched
	Number of selected municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive MTBP	3	5	Annual reports	3 municipalities adopt and implement gender-responsive MTBPs 11 municipalities with fully costed-social care plans, reflected in MTBP

Output 1.6 Migration and Asylum—Government authorities have strengthened capacities to enhance effective migration and asylum management					
UNHCR IOM UNICEF UN WOMEN	Number of measures of Action Plan of National Strategy on Migration Governance implemented	0	10	Stakeholder reports	2 measures—A.2.1.a and A.2.1.b—in implementation with IOM support
	Extent to which Asylum Procedures are compliant with international refugee law and the EU acquis	60%	70%	Gap analysis (legal, institutional, practice) Systematic border monitoring Monitoring of RSD procedures	60%
	Reception capacities at the border increased, with a differentiated approach for at-risk women and children	1 centre for women and children at risk (15 persons)	1 centre for women and children at risk (35 persons) in Gjirokaster Increased in Korca with 12 persons in a centre for women and children at risk	Ministry of Internal Affairs reports Monitoring of border situation	Centre for Registration and Temporary Accommodation of Migrants, fully equipped, with capacity for 60 people, established in Kapshtica, Korce Centre in Erseka increased capacity to 30 persons Centre in Gjirokaster increased capacity to 20 persons
	Assessments of the current legal framework and IT infrastructure for the introduction of Advance Passenger Information	No	Yes	DCM on endorsement of policy	Yes; completed Assessment of current legal framework and IT infrastructure completed by IOM in context of regional project and handed over to relevant authorities
	Mapping of Albanian diaspora, including sex-disaggregated data	0	3 (Italy and two other countries)	Gap analysis (legal, institutional, practice) Systematic border monitoring Monitoring of RSD procedures	Diaspora mapping exercise completed; report to be finalised in 2020 Q2
	Diaspora mechanisms for skills transfer and investment boosting in place	No	Yes	Ministry of Interior reports; monitoring of border situation Systematic monitoring of National Centre for Asylum seekers and closed centre for irregular migrants	Fellowship mechanism for skilled diaspora members in place for institutional support and revitalization of remote cultural sites in Albania, as well as boosting local development
	SOPs for case management of unaccompanied refugee and migrant children developed	0	1	ONAC reports	Pre-screening awaiting approval
	Set of migration data is available	No	yes	Migration survey report	Yes: Household Migration Survey conducted by INSTAT with IOM support; report to be published in 2020 Q1

Outcome 2— Social cohesion: Health, education, social inclusion and protection, child protection and gender-based violence

All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights, while more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion.

National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law; Investing in People and Social Cohesion

EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas: 19, 23, 24, 32

SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17

Participating Agencies	Indicator	Baseline 2016	Outcome Target (2021) Output Target (2019)	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019
WHO UNICEF UNFPA IOM UNESCO UNDP UN WOMEN FAO IAEA ILO	Private household out-of-pocket expenditure as a proportion of total health expenditure	55%	40%	World Bank reports INSTAT	Not available 2019 data 55% per 2018 data
	Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	Total 26 Female 12 Male 14	Total 9 (30% reduction) Female 8.5 (30% reduction) Male 10 (30% reduction)	UN IGME https://data.unicef.org/resources/levels-trends-child-mortality/	Total: 8
	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 deliveries)	29 (UN IGME) 32 (2016 INSTAT)	20 (30% reduction)	UN IGME	15
	Net enrolment rates	<u>Pre-Primary</u> Total, 81.34% Girls, 80.6% Boys, 82% Roma, 55% <u>Primary 2013</u> Total, 95.92% Girls, 94.8% Boys, 96.2% Roma, 61.4%	<u>Pre-Primary</u> Total, 98% Girls, 98% Boys, 98% Roma, 75% <u>Primary 2021</u> Total, 100% Girls, 100% Boys, 100% Roma, 80%	MoESY reports INSTAT UNESCO INSTAT UNHCR annual reports OECD Biannual report of MoHSP	<u>Pre-Primary</u> Total, 71.9% Girls, 70.1% Boys, 73.6% <u>Primary</u> Total, 95.8% Girls, 94.1% Boys, 97.5% <u>Children with Disabilities Basic Education</u> Total, 87.7% Girls, 86.5% Boys, 88.8%
	Schoolchildren's learning outcomes (as measured by PISA)	Reading, 394 Maths, 394 Science, 397	Reading, 494 Maths, 496 Science, 501	OECD Biannual report of MoHSP	Reading, 405 Maths, 437 Science, 417
	Number of sector-specific policies with explicit social inclusion targets	4	24	INSTAT Biannual report of MoHSP Line ministry policy documents, NSDI 2015–2020 monitoring framework	21 out of 24
	Level of implementation of National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian Integration	Rated 2	Rated at least 3 (based on estimated rating from 1 to 5) ¹	UN, EU and stakeholders' qualitative assessment(s), sector and country progress reports MoHSP and SSS records	Rated 3 (rating of 0 to 5)
	Rate of children (age 0–17 years) in residential (public and non-public) care per 100,000 child population	84	42	UN, EU and stakeholders' qualitative assessment(s), sector and country progress reports MoHSP and SSS records	83 (2017) Data are not available to report on this indicator
	Number of national mechanisms collecting evidence and addressing violence against children	4: police, CPUs, schools, helpline	At least 6: police, CPUs, schools, helpline, health centres, online and web-based platform	State Agency for Child Rights Protection annual reports	6: police, CPUs, schools, helpline, health centres, online and web-based platform
	% women who have experienced physical violence during their life	23.7%	21%	INSTAT	18%

Output 2.1 Health—There is increased access to quality, inclusive, equitable, and affordable health-care services, and community demand is increased					
UNFPA UNICEF WHO IAEA FAO IOM	Monitoring and evaluation reports on comprehensive national health policies and action plans on UHC, NCD control, RH, HIV and TB	1	3	Reports produced by MoHSP	4: SRH, HIV, TB, Cervical Cancer Control
	Number of health-care institutions that have conducted self-assessment on compliance with approved Quality of Care Standards	5 hospitals	11 hospitals and 30 Primary Health Care Centres	Reports produced by the National Centre for the Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions	6 Primary Health Care Centers; 1 Municipality Hospital; 4 Regional Hospitals; 3 University Hospitals; 3 University Hospital Services
	Number of patients diagnosed with cancer using imaging nuclear medicine techniques and treated with radiation therapy in public hospitals	20%	+40% by 2021; Therapy +40% by 2021; 1302 (Cobalt and Therapax) of which 225 breast cases	Reports produced by Mother Theresa University Hospital	+20% (compared to 2017)
Output 2.2 Education—Education policies, mechanisms, community partnerships and actions are strengthened for quality inclusive education					
UNICEF UNESCO UNFPA IOM	Availability of inclusive mechanisms for prevention and response towards out-of-school children and children at risk of drop-out for all relevant actors	Mechanism for preventing drop-out developed	Number of teachers trained in inclusive and preventive methodologies; Number of municipalities identifying out-of-school children by implementing mechanism for OOSC identification	MoESY policy documents, reports, Minister approval letter	4 municipalities identify out-of-school children 500 teachers trained
	Presence of CSE in all schools at all levels, private and public, for children of age 10–18 years	20%	50%	MoESY policy documents, reports, Minister approval letter	50%
	Number of schools and children reached with prevention against trafficking in human beings and education interventions	1200	2500	Agreements, report from project and MoESY	2100

Output 2.3 Social Inclusion and Protection—Social protection measures and mechanisms at national and local levels are strengthened with budgets and clear targets that reflect equity and social inclusion standards					
UNDP UNFPA UNICEF UN WOMEN IOM	Inter-sectoral monitoring and coordination mechanism established and performing according to its mandate or ToR	0	1 (SIIG)	GoA and MoHSP Social Inclusion annual reports	SIIG established in cooperation with line ministries to ensure alignment and integrity of data for measuring, monitoring and reporting on national policies and programmes outlined in Social Inclusion Policy Document
	Policy or budgetary framework that explicitly addresses child poverty and disparities available	No	Yes	Quality assessment measured against EU and international standards SIIG reports NSDI implementation report	UNICEF supported INSTAT in collecting data in 2018 following Eurostat child deprivation module. INSTAT reported officially for the first-time child monetary poverty in 2019, using EU indicator 'children at risk of poverty'. INSTAT has in place a roadmap to measure child multiple deprivation using EU child deprivation index. Data 2017–2018 show 29.6% of Albanian children are reported at-risk-of poverty, with girls more affected by poverty: 30.6% compared with 28.7% of boys in 2018, and 31.8% and 27.7%, respectively, in 2017.
	Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems established countrywide	0	7 municipalities	GoA and MoHSP annual reports	11 municipalities have in place costed social care plans and clear guidelines and workflows on how social welfare departments will implement social protection policies effectively to harmonise cash and care. Secondary legislation is also in place.
	Number of R&E women and men with improved access to basic social protection services	357 R&E benefited from integrated community-based social services 112 R&E included in reintegration programmes 184 R&E benefited from employment measures	100 R&E benefited from integrated community-based social services 50 R&E included in reintegration programmes 50 R&E benefited from employment measures	Government progress report on implementation of NAPIRE ESERE project progress report	300 R&E children and 218 families in Fier, Fushe-Kruja and Lezhe benefited from Integrated Social Services Model (f, 50%) 372 R&E benefited from integrated community-based social services 312 R&Es benefited from employment and income generation measures.
	Number of municipalities with improved capacities, organisation development and quality management of service providers, and effective planning and budgeting	Five municipal public service providers	6 new municipalities include GRB in MTBP	Record of participatory planning and budgeting of services at local levels	16 LGUs have costed social care plans and clear guidelines and workflows for implementation 11 municipalities developed budget briefs on social care services 3 new municipalities include GRB in MTBP

Output 2.4 Child Protection —Child protection systems are strengthened to prevent and respond to cases of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children, with a particular focus on vulnerable children and families					
UNICEF WHO IOM ILO	Number of instruments facilitating implementation of legal framework for child protection in place	0	5 ministerial instructions adopted	Parliament records Council of Ministers records	17
	% of CPUs that perform case management of at-risk children in need of protection	26%	45%	State Agency on Child Rights and Protection annual report	79%
	National Action Plan for Child and Family Social Services (De-institutionalisation Plan) available in the country	Policy drafted	Children in 9 public residential care institutions assessed	State Agency on Child Rights and Protection annual report	All children in 9 public residential care institutions assessed
	Number of (potential) VoT identified by CPUs	26	50	Yearly reports produced by Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (ONAC)	59
Output 2.5 Gender-Based Violence —Capacity of institutions and service providers to implement legislation and normative standards on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) and other forms of discrimination is strengthened					
UNDP UN WOMEN UNFPA WHO UNICEF IOM	Number of GBV-related laws and by-laws adopted or amended to align with international and regional standards	2 laws 0 by-laws	2-laws 20 by-laws	Parliament website Council of Ministers website Line ministries	16 by-laws
	Number of municipalities with functional CRMs	27	49	Yearly reports produced by MoHSP	49
	Number of cases of GBV addressed through CRMs	312	450	MoHSP reports REVALB, MoHSP	637
	Existence of improved knowledge on child marriage	No	Yes	UNFPA and UNICEF reports	Yes

Outcome 3—Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture

Economic growth priorities, policies, and programmes of the Government of Albania are inclusive, sustainable, and gender-responsive, with greater focus on competitiveness, decent jobs and rural development

National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Growth Through Increased Competitiveness; Investing in People and Social Cohesion; Growth Through Sustainable Resources & Territorial Development

EU Integration Chapters and Priority Areas: 8, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20, 26

SDGs: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17

Participating Agencies	Indicator	Baseline 2016	Outcome Target (2021) Output Target (2019)	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019
UNDP UN WOMEN FAO UNECE UNCTAD ILO UNESCO IOM	Ease of Doing Business (score)	60.5	72.13	World Bank: Doing Business Report	63 score World Bank Doing Business Report 2020 ranks Albania 82 nd out of 190 economies, a decrease of 19 positions from the 2019 report, largely to underperformance in indicators related to minority investor protection and building permits
	Number of new businesses established, by sex of owner	Total, 16,731 Female, 1,947 Male, 14,784	Annual 10% increase	National Registration Centre Annual reports	2018 NRC Report, p.30 http://www.qkb.gov.al/media/32327/raport-vjetor-2018-shqip.pdf Total, 18,624 Female, 11,248 Male, 7376
	Youth unemployment rate (young men and women of age 15–29 years who are without, available for, and seeking work)	Total, 34.2% Female, 35.9% Male, 33.3%	Total, 20.5% Female, 21% Male, 20%	INSTAT Labour Force Survey	Total, 21.4% Female, 21.5% Male, 21.2%
	Growth of agriculture sector 2016–2020	2.25%	5%	INSTAT	3.5%
	Agriculture export : import ratio	1:4.5	1:3	INSTAT	1:3
	Global Innovation Index rank	87	75	Cornell University, INSEAD, WIPO: www.globalinnovationindex.org/	83

Output 3.1 Economic Development—Central and local governments are able to deliver effective economic support services and implement urban development policies that promote gender equality, the green economy and inclusive and sustainable industrial development

UNECE UNCTAD	Number of trainings for Competition and Consumer Protection staff and other officials and judges in specific course for the academy	3	5	Project report	5
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Output 3.2 Labour—Labour market governance, tripartite dialogue and collective bargaining are strengthened and reduce informal employment, improve occupational health and safety, and enhance the employability of youth, women and other vulnerable groups

UNDP UN WOMEN ILO IOM FAO	Number of trainings for MC staff	1	3	MoFE/NES reports	2
UNECE UNCTAD	% of regional strategies and action plans inclusive of reintegration schemes for VoT	25%	50%	Regional Strategies and Action Plans	100%; all Prefectures and Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees have incorporated reintegration schemes for VoT in their regional action plans

Output 3.3 Agriculture and Rural Development —There is increased capacity to design and implement policies and strategies for sustainable rural development and modernisation of the agricultural sector that are gender sensitive and empower rural women					
FAO UN WOMEN	Number of actions that raise awareness of rural women's role and rights in agriculture and rural economy	1	1 nationwide campaign implemented in rural areas disseminating information on rural women's role	UN WOMEN CO Annual Report	Albania Working the Land, which took place on 16–17 November. FAO and UN WOMEN cooperated together and participated jointly in the fair, disclosing some of their best practices in relation to typical organic products, slow food and rural women products
	Women's share among beneficiaries of agriculture extension service	11%	13%	MoARD	28%
Output 3.4 Culture —State institutions have inclusive and equitable policies to foster cultural and creative resources, improve access to cultural markets, improve gender balance in the tourism workforce, protect cultural diversity, and improve the management of cultural heritage as drivers and enablers for sustainable development					
UNESCO	Inter-institutional mechanisms in place for cultural and natural heritage management, including for sustainable tourism	No mechanism in place	Mechanism in place (new law adopted) and required sub-laws elaborated and adopted	Laws adopted, reports on implementation of conventions, decisions of government	Inter-institutional mechanism created within Ohrid project, with involvement of main governmental stakeholders, as well as local communities and CSO sector Nomination file for extension of WH property Natural and Cultural heritage of Lake Ohrid Region submitted to World Heritage Centre (2018) and extension inscribed by WH Committee (2019)
	Culture mainstreamed within development programmes at all levels, by means of providing an evidence base on impact of culture for development and implementing a national strategy for culture	No	Yes, regular reporting ensured	Laws adopted, reports on implementation of conventions, decisions of government	Approval of Law 27/2018 'On Cultural Heritage and Museums' (May 17, 2018) Adoption of national Strategy for Culture 2019–2023 and Action Plan (May 2019)

Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change

Government and non-government actors adopt and implement innovative, gender-sensitive national and local actions for environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction

National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Growth Through Sustainable Resources and Territorial Development; Investing in People and Social Cohesion; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law (Strengthening Public Order and Emergency Preparedness)

EU Integration Chapters and Priority Areas: 15, 27

SDGs: 3,6,7,9,11,12,13,14,15,17

Participating Agencies	Indicator	Baseline 2016	Outcome Target (2021) Output Target (2019)	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2019
UNDP UNICEF UNEP UNESCO FAO WHO UNECE UNIDO UN WOMEN	Extent to which comprehensive measures (plans, strategies, policies, programmes and budgets) are being implemented to achieve low-emission and climate-resilient development objectives	Current Renewable Energy Sources (RES) in energy portfolio, 34.22%	38% RES in energy mix (Energy Community Treaty Target)	EU report National communication to UNFCCC Ministry of Tourism and Environment: State of Environment report GEF tracking tool	34.6% share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption in 2017 https://energy-community.org/implementation/Albania/RE.html
	Number of hectares of land that are managed sustainably as protected areas under a conservation, sustainable use or access- and benefits-sharing regime	9,424 ha	73,219 ha	National Agency for Protected Areas, local environmental inspectorates and agencies, LGU environment departments CBD reports	9,424 ha Management plans and business plans are developed for 3 national parks, and administrations assisted to measure management performance and financial gap
	% of farmers accessing disaster early warning system	0% Female, 30%	10% Female, 30%	MoARD; Early Warning Platform to be established during 2016	10% Female, 30%
	Gender action plan for climate change adaptation and mitigation prepared	No plan	Action plan prepared	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE) reporting	As planned: Gender Action plan for climate change adaptation and mitigation drafted as part of the First Biennial Update Report; consultations on the way
Output 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change —Scaled-up action on DRR and climate change ² mitigation and adaptation across sectors					
UNDP UNICEF UNIDO UNEP UNESCO FAO WHO UN WOMEN	Number of sites, including World Heritage sites, with costed DRR plans or interventions that are gender-sensitive	0 (UNESCO) sites	3 (UNESCO) sites	Ministry of Interior report World Heritage management plans	3 (UNESCO) sites
	Number of financial mechanisms and 'pipelines' developed to access climate finance, including GCF	0	3	Quantitative information from MoTE EPR report	A draft programme document for Albania to access GCF is developed

	Number of partnerships at local level for improved energy efficiency and sustainable energy solutions, including businesses, targeting also under-served communities, groups and women	5 partnerships 11 factories	10 partnerships 15 demonstration plants or factories	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy reports, Ministry of Interior reports, Project documents EPR report	Work underway to (a) create an inventory of public building stock and to place data on a server of Energy Efficiency Agency by naming and codifying them in the national electronic register, and (b) audit entire stock of buildings for 3 years, allowing data access and cost effective analysis of renewal, according to requirements of Law No 116/2016 of 10.11.2016 'On energy performance in buildings' Planned partnerships to become operational subject to endorsement of GCF support for Energy Efficiency on Public Buildings
Output 4.2 Natural Resources —Central and local institutions and communities are strengthened to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources					
UNECE UNDP UNICEF UNIDO UNEP UNESCO FAO WHO	Categories of Protected areas and Biosphere reserves with working, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms	0	2 plus Prespa Lakes Zone	NAPA, CBD UNECE Committee on Housing, Land Management and Population Ministry of Urban Development Joint commission for the protection and rational use of water resources MoARD, water basins commissions	1 biosphere reserve (Ohrid&Prespa Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve) Assessment tool for marine habitats and their management, and piloting the interpretative Marine Spatial Framework Decision toolkit for the marine park
	Public school grades implementing new curriculum on environmental education and sustainable development	Implemented in Grades 1 and 5	Implemented in other Grades	Reports from MoTE and MoEYS	Educational programs for the local secondary schools are being implemented at the Visitor Centre of targeted PAs
	Presence and quality of first, and gender-sensitive, Biennial Update Report of Albania to UNFCCC	No BUR 3rd UNFCCC report in place	First BUR finalised Initiation of 4th UNFCCC that is gender sensitive	National Reports to UNCCD	First BUR being finalised, technical chapter undergoing peerreview; publication to be submitted by end of 2020

Annex B: Administrative agent financial report on Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for 2019

Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the Administrative Agent for the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019 - Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Bureau for Management Services United Nations Development Programme GATEWAY: <http://mptf.undp.org> - 8 May 2020

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

-  Economic Commission for Europe
-  Food and Agriculture Organization
-  International Atomic Energy Agency
-  International Labour Organisation
-  International Organization for Migration
-  International Trade Centre
-  Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS/HIV
-  UN Conference on Trade and Development
-  United Nations Development Programme
-  United Nations Environment Programme
-  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CONTRIBUTORS

-  ALBANIA, Government of
-  AUSTRIA, Government of
-  Delivering Results Together
-  EUROPEAN UNION
-  Expanded DaO Funding Window
-  FINLAND, Government of
-  NETHERLANDS, Government of
-  NORWAY, Government of
-  SPAIN, Government of
-  SWEDISH INT'L DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
-  SWISS AGY FOR DEVELOPMENT & COOPERATION
-  SWITZERLAND, Government of

DEFINITIONS

Allocation

Amount approved by the Steering Committee for a project/programme.

Approved Project/Programme

A project/programme including budget, etc., that is approved by the Steering Committee for fund allocation purposes.

Contributor Commitment

Amount(s) committed by a donor to a Fund in a signed Standard Administrative Arrangement with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in its capacity as the Administrative Agent. A commitment may be paid or pending payment.

Contributor Deposit

Cash deposit received by the MPTF Office for the Fund from a contributor in accordance with a signed Standard Administrative Arrangement.

Delivery Rate

The percentage of funds that have been utilized, calculated by comparing expenditures reported by a Participating Organization against the 'net funded amount'.

Indirect Support Costs

A general cost that cannot be directly related to any particular programme or activity of the Participating Organizations. UNDG policy establishes a fixed indirect cost rate of 7% of programmable costs.

Net Funded Amount

Amount transferred to a Participating Organization less any refunds transferred back to the MPTF Office by a Participating Organization.

Participating Organization

A UN Organization or other inter-governmental Organization that is an implementing partner in a Fund, as represented by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MPTF Office for a particular Fund.

Project Expenditure

The sum of expenses and/or expenditure reported by all Participating Organizations for a Fund irrespective of which basis of accounting each Participating Organization follows for donor reporting.

Project Financial Closure

A project or programme is considered financially closed when all financial obligations of an operationally completed project or programme have been settled, and no further financial charges may be incurred.

Project Operational Closure

A project or programme is considered operationally closed when all programmatic activities for which Participating Organization(s) received funding have been completed.

Project Start Date

Date of transfer of first instalment from the MPTF Office to the Participating Organization.

Total Approved Budget

This represents the cumulative amount of allocations approved by the Steering Committee.

US Dollar Amount

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

INTRODUCTION

This Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** is prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) in fulfillment of its obligations as Administrative Agent, as per the terms of Reference (TOR), the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the UNDP MPTF Office and the Participating Organizations, and the Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA) signed with contributors.

The MPTF Office, as Administrative Agent, is responsible for concluding an MOU with Participating Organizations and SAAs with contributors. It receives, administers and manages contributions, and disburses these funds to the Participating Organizations. The Administrative Agent prepares and submits annual consolidated financial reports, as well as regular financial statements, for transmission to contributors.

This consolidated financial report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2019 and provides financial data on progress made in the implementation of projects of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. It is posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY (<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100>).

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

2019 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

This chapter presents financial data and analysis of the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** using the pass-through funding modality as of 31 December **2019**. Financial information for this Fund is also available on the MPTF Office GATEWAY, at the following address:

<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100>.

This consolidated financial report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2019 and provides financial data on progress made in the implementation of projects of the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund**. It is posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY

(<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100>).

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

1. SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

As of 31 December 2019, 12 contributors deposited US\$ **47,461,153** in contributions and US\$ **429,280** was earned in interest.

The cumulative source of funds was US\$ **47,890,433**.

Of this amount, US\$ **46,407,064** has been net funded to 18 Participating Organizations, of which US\$ **42,593,341** has been reported as expenditure. The Administrative Agent fee has been charged at the approved rate of 1% on deposits and amounts to US\$ **474,611**. Table 1 provides an overview of the overall sources, uses, and balance of the **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** as of 31 December 2019.

Table 1. Financial Overview, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

	Annual 2018	Annual 2019	Cumulative
Sources of Funds			
Contributions from donors	4,431,061	4,025,060	47,461,153
Fund Earned Interest and Investment Income	11,579	14,996	307,897
Interest Income received from Participating Organizations	273	396	121,384
Refunds by Administrative Agent to Contributors	-	-	-
Fund balance transferred to another MDTF	-	-	-
Other Income	-	-	-
Total: Sources of Funds	4,442,913	4,040,453	47,890,433
Use of Funds			
Transfers to Participating Organizations	2,208,835	5,402,404	49,438,835
Refunds received from Participating Organizations	(53,714)	(150,333)	(3,031,771)
Net Funded Amount	2,155,121	5,252,071	46,407,064
Administrative Agent Fees	44,311	40,251	474,611
Direct Costs: (Steering Committee, Secretariat...etc.)	-	-	-
Bank Charges	3	81	893
Other Expenditures	-	-	-
Total: Uses of Funds	2,199,435	5,292,403	46,882,567
Change in Fund cash balance with Administrative Agent	2,243,478	(1,251,950)	1,007,866
Opening Fund balance (1 January)	16,338	2,259,816	-
Closing Fund balance (31 December)	2,259,816	1,007,866	1,007,866
Net Funded Amount (Includes Direct Cost)	2,155,121	5,252,071	46,407,064
Participating Organizations' Expenditure (Includes Direct Cost)	2,112,025	3,353,099	42,593,341
Balance of Funds with Participating Organizations			3,813,723

2. PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

Table 2 provides information on cumulative contributions received from all contributors to this Fund as of 31 December **2019**.

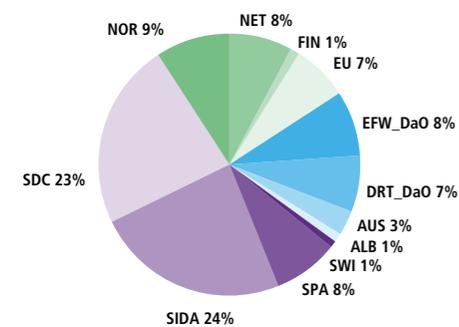
The **Albania SDG Acceleration Fund** is currently being financed by **12** contributors, as listed in the table below.

The table below includes commitments made up to 31 December 2019 through signed Standard Administrative Agreements, and deposits made through **2019**. It does not include commitments that were made to the fund beyond **2019**.

Table 2. Contributors' Commitments and Deposits, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

Contributors	Total Commitments	Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018 Deposits	Current Year Jan-Dec-2019 Deposits	Total Deposits
ALBANIA, Government of	2,653,747	153,747	500,000	653,747
AUSTRIA, Government of	1,214,737	1,214,737	-	1,214,737
Delivering Results Together	3,116,750	3,116,750	-	3,116,750
EUROPEAN UNION	3,474,781	3,474,781	-	3,474,781
Expanded DaO Funding Window	3,825,000	3,825,000	-	3,825,000
FINLAND, Government of	394,240	394,240	-	394,240
NETHERLANDS, Government of	3,845,700	3,845,700	-	3,845,700
NORWAY, Government of	4,193,919	3,338,389	855,530	4,193,919
SPAIN, Government of	4,000,000	4,000,000	-	4,000,000
SWEDISH INT'L DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION	11,159,033	10,742,908	416,125	11,159,033
SWISS AGY FOR DEVELOPMENT & COOPERATION	11,121,693	8,868,288	2,253,406	11,121,693
SWITZERLAND, Government of	461,553	461,553	-	461,553
Grand Total	49,461,153	43,436,093	4,025,060	47,461,153

Deposits by contributor, cumulative as of 31 December 2019



3. INTEREST EARNED

Interest income is earned in two ways: 1) on the balance of funds held by the Administrative Agent (Fund earned interest), and 2) on the balance of funds held by the Participating Organizations (Agency earned interest) where their Financial Regulations and Rules allow return of interest to the AA.

As of 31 December **2019**, Fund earned interest amounts to US\$ **307,897**.

Interest received from Participating Organizations amounts to US\$ 121,384, bringing the cumulative interest received to US\$ **429,280**.

Details are provided in the table below.

Table 3. Sources of Interest and Investment Income, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

Interest Earned	Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018	Current Year Jan-Dec-2019	Total
Administrative Agent			
Fund Earned Interest and Investment Income	292,900	14,996	307,897
Total: Fund Earned Interest	292,900	14,996	307,897
Participating Organization			
ECE	49		49
FAO	595		595
UNDP	84,070		84,070
UNESCO	2,310		2,310
UNFPA	22,154		22,154
UNIDO	4,926		4,926
UNODC	104	396	500
UNWOMEN	6,780		6,780
Total: Agency earned interest	120,987	396	121,384
Grand Total	413,888	15,393	429,280

4. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Allocations to Participating Organizations are approved by the Steering Committee and disbursed by the Administrative Agent. As of 31 December 2019, the AA has transferred US\$ 49,438,835 to 18 Participating Organizations (see list below).

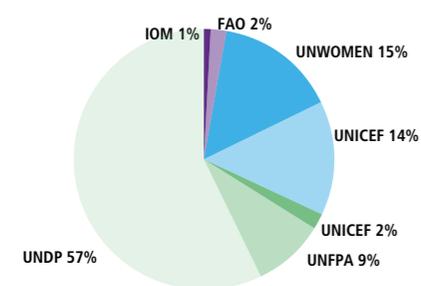
4.1 TRANSFER BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

Table 4 provides additional information on the refunds received by the MPTF Office, and the net funded amount for each of the Participating Organizations.

Table 4. Transfer, Refund, and Net Funded Amount by Participating Organization, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

Participating Organization	Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018			Current Year Jan-Dec-2019			Total		
	Transfers	Refunds	Net Funded	Transfers	Refunds	Net Funded	Transfers	Refunds	Net Funded
ECE	79,500	(9,575)	69,925				79,500	(9,575)	69,925
FAO	315,300	(36,811)	278,489	100,000		100,000	415,300	(36,811)	378,489
IAEA	94,461		94,461				94,461		94,461
ILO	75,000	(2,921)	72,079				75,000	(2,921)	72,079
IOM	334,996		334,996	50,000		50,000	384,996		384,996
ITC	30,000	(1,999)	28,001				30,000	(1,999)	28,001
UNAIDS	185,815	(661)	185,154		(234)	(234)	185,815	(895)	184,920
UNCTAD	178,500		178,500				178,500		178,500
UNDP	20,541,103	(1,974,979)	18,566,123	3,056,802	(54,490)	3,002,312	23,597,905	(2,029,469)	21,568,436
UNEP	439,244		439,244				439,244		439,244
UNESCO	934,118	(126,001)	808,118				934,118	(126,001)	808,118
UNFPA	5,113,096	(41,344)	5,071,752	463,053	(84,127)	378,925	5,576,149	(125,472)	5,450,677
UNHCR				125,000		125,000	125,000		125,000
UNICEF	9,357,978	(365,384)	8,992,594	775,604		775,604	10,133,583	(365,384)	9,768,198
UNIDO	665,848	(182,033)	483,815				665,848	(182,033)	483,815
UNODC	388,315		388,315		(11,193)	(11,193)	388,315	(11,193)	377,122
UNWOMEN	4,412,620	(49,046)	4,363,574	831,945	(289)	831,656	5,244,565	(49,335)	5,195,230
WHO	890,536	(90,684)	799,852				890,536	(90,684)	799,852
Grand Total	44,036,431	(2,881,438)	41,154,993	5,402,404	(150,333)	5,252,071	49,438,835	(3,031,771)	46,407,064

Transfers amount by Participating Organization for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2019



5. EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL DELIVERY RATES

All final expenditures reported for the year 2019 were submitted by the Headquarters of the Participating Organizations. These were consolidated by the MPTF Office.

Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each Participating Organization, and are reported as per the agreed upon categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. The reported expenditures were submitted via the MPTF Office's online expenditure reporting tool. The 2019 expenditure data has been posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY at <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100>.

5.1 EXPENDITURE REPORTED BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

In 2019, US\$ 5,252,071 was net funded to Participating Organizations, and US\$ 3,353,099 was reported in expenditure.

As shown in table below, the cumulative net funded amount is US\$ 46,407,064 and cumulative expenditures reported by the Participating Organizations amount to US\$ 42,593,341. This equates to an overall Fund expenditure delivery rate of 92 percent.

Table 5.1. Net Funded Amount, Reported Expenditure, and Financial Delivery by Participating Organization, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

Participating Organization	Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Expenditure			Delivery Rate %
			Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018	Current Year Jan-Dec-2019	Cumulative	
ECE	79,500	69,925	69,925		69,925	100.00
FAO	415,300	378,489	278,489		278,489	73.58
IAEA	94,461	94,461	94,461		94,461	100.00
ILO	75,000	72,079	72,079		72,079	100.00
IOM	384,996	384,996	334,996		334,996	87.01
ITC	30,000	28,001	28,001		28,001	100.00
UNAIDS	185,815	184,920	184,919		184,919	100.00
UNCTAD	178,500	178,500	176,016		176,016	98.61
UNDP	23,597,905	21,568,436	17,296,268	2,193,362	19,489,630	90.36
UNEP	439,244	439,244	430,224		430,224	97.95
UNESCO	934,118	808,118	807,789	328	808,118	100.00
UNFPA	5,576,149	5,450,677	4,999,551	233,152	5,232,703	96.00
UNHCR	125,000	125,000				0
UNICEF	10,133,583	9,768,198	8,561,391	606,393	9,167,784	93.85
UNIDO	665,946	483,815	483,815		483,815	100.00
UNODC	388,315	377,122	378,979	(1,857)	377,122	100.00
UNWOMEN	5,244,566	5,195,230	4,243,487	321,720	4,565,207	87.87
WHO	890,536	799,852	799,852		799,852	100.00
Grand Total	49,438,933	46,407,064	39,240,242	3,353,099	42,593,341	91.78

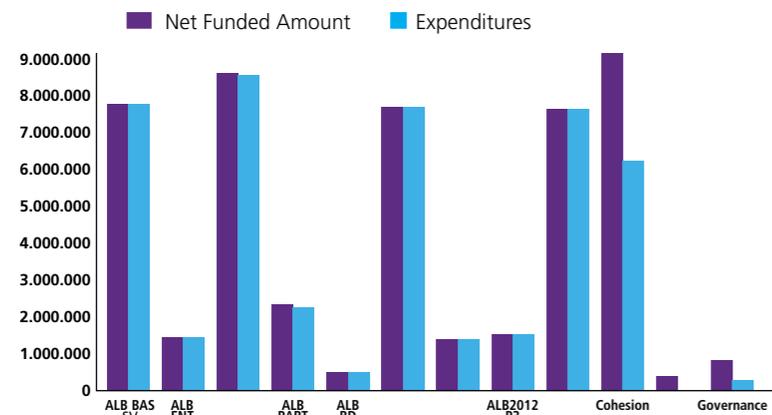
5.2 EXPENDITURE BY UNDAF OUTCOME

Table 5 displays the net funded amounts, expenditures incurred and the financial delivery rates by UNDAF Outcome.

Table 5. Expenditure by UNDAF Outcome, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

Country/Sector	Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018		Current Year Jan-Dec-2019		Total		Delivery Rate %
	Net Funded Amount	Expenditure	Net Funded Amount	Expenditure	Net Funded Amount	Expenditure	
Albania							
ALB 2012 P1 Governance	7,281,673	7,213,074	(54,490)	4,020	7,227,183	7,217,094	99.86
ALB 2012 P2 Econ & Environment	1,331,467	1,320,852			1,331,467	1,320,852	99.20
ALB 2012 P3 Regl& Local Devt	1,447,181	1,446,871		36	1,447,181	1,446,907	99.98
ALB 2012 P4 Inclus Soc Policy	7,194,753	7,175,217	(11,716)	(1,735)	7,183,037	7,173,482	99.87
Basic Services	7,322,092	7,322,092			7,322,092	7,322,092	100.00
Environment	1,387,150	1,386,572			1,387,150	1,386,572	99.96
Environment & Climate Change			365,000	3,925	365,000	3,925	1.08
Governance	8,070,310	8,024,560			8,070,310	8,024,560	99.43
Governance and Rule of Law	255,053	253,469	544,490	4,527	799,543	257,997	32.27
Participation	2,189,722	2,134,686			2,189,722	2,134,686	97.49
Regional Development	481,000	481,000			481,000	481,000	100.00
Social Cohesion	4,194,592	2,481,850	4,408,787	3,342,325	8,603,379	5,824,175	67.70
Albania Total:	41,154,993	39,240,242	5,252,071	3,353,099	46,407,064	42,593,341	91.78
Grand Total:	41,154,993	39,240,242	5,252,071	3,353,099	46,407,064	42,593,341	91.78

Cumulative Net Funded Amount and Expenditure with Breakdown by Sector



5.4 EXPENDITURE REPORTED BY CATEGORY

Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each Participating Organization and are reported as per the agreed categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. In 2006 the UN Development Group (UNDG) established six categories against which UN entities must report inter-agency project expenditures. Effective 1 January 2012, the UN Chief Executive Board (CEB) modified these categories as a result of IPSAS adoption to comprise eight categories. All expenditure incurred prior to 1 January 2012 have been reported in the old categories; post 1 January 2012 all expenditure are reported in the new eight categories. See table below.

2012 CEB Expense Categories

1. Staff and personnel costs
2. Supplies, commodities and materials
3. Equipment, vehicles, furniture and depreciation
4. Contractual services
5. Travel
6. Transfers and grants
7. General operating expenses
8. Indirect costs

06 UNDG Expense Categories

1. Supplies, commodities, equipment & transport
2. Personnel
3. Training counterparts
4. Contracts
5. Other direct costs
6. Indirect costs

Table 6. Expenditure by UNDG Budget Category, as of 31 December 2019 (in US Dollars)

Category	Expenditure			Percentage of Total Programme Cost
	Prior Years as of 31-Dec-2018	Current Year Jan-Dec-2019	Total	
Supplies, Commodities, Equipment and Transport (Old)	1,836,091	-	1,836,091	4.62
Personnel (Old)	6,223,909	-	6,223,909	15.65
Training of Counterparts (Old)	371,723	-	371,723	0.93
Contracts (Old)	8,276,599	-	8,276,599	20.81
Other direct costs (Old)	1,217,459	-	1,217,459	3.06
Staff & Personnel Cost (New)	1,830,273	70,078	1,900,350	4.78
Suppl, Comm, Materials (New)	301,665	80,778	382,444	0.96
Equip, Veh, Furn, Depn (New)	488,675	121,129	609,804	1.53
Contractual Services (New)	9,670,698	1,629,475	11,300,172	28.41
Travel (New)	995,815	155,709	1,151,525	2.90
Transfers and Grants (New)	2,694,369	615,455	3,309,824	8.32
General Operating (New)	2,761,551	427,854	3,189,404	8.02
Programme Costs Total	36,668,825	3,100,477	39,769,302	100.00
1 Indirect Support Costs Total	2,571,418	252,621	2,824,039	7.10
Total	39,240,242	3,353,099	42,593,341	

1. **Indirect Support Costs** charged by Participating Organization, based on their financial regulations, can be deducted upfront or at a later stage during implementation. The percentage may therefore appear to exceed the 7% agreed-upon for on-going projects. Once projects are financially closed, this number is not to exceed 7%.

6. COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery policies for the Fund are guided by the applicable provisions of the Terms of Reference, the MOU concluded between the Administrative Agent and Participating Organizations, and the SAAs concluded between the Administrative Agent and Contributors, based on rates approved by UNDG.

The policies in place, as of 31 December 2019, were as follows:

- The Administrative Agent (AA) fee: 1% is charged at the time of contributor deposit and covers services provided on that contribution for the entire duration of the Fund. In the reporting period US\$ 40,251 was deducted in AA-fees. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2019, US\$ 474,611 has been charged in AA-fees.
- Indirect Costs of Participating Organizations: Participating Organizations may charge 7% indirect costs. In the current reporting period US\$ 252,621 was deducted in indirect costs by Participating Organizations. Cumulatively, indirect costs amount to US\$ 2,824,039 as of 31 December 2019.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

In order to effectively provide fund administration services and facilitate monitoring and reporting to the UN system and its partners, the MPTF Office has developed a public website, the MPTF Office Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org>). Refreshed in real time every two hours from an internal enterprise resource planning system, the MPTF Office Gateway has become a standard setter for providing transparent and accountable trust fund administration services.

The Gateway provides financial information including: contributor commitments and deposits, approved programme budgets, transfers to and expenditures reported by Participating Organizations, interest income and other expenses. In addition, the Gateway provides an overview of the MPTF Office portfolio and extensive information on individual Funds, including their purpose, governance structure and key documents. By providing easy access to the growing number of narrative and financial reports, as well as related project documents, the Gateway collects and preserves important institutional knowledge and facilitates knowledge sharing and management among UN Organizations and their development partners, thereby contributing to UN coherence and development effectiveness.

Annex C: Financial overview of 2019 total budget, including all sources of funding

Outcomes	Available Budget		Total Available Budget	Total Funding Gap	Expenditures		Total Expenditures	Delivery rate in %
	Core/Regular	Non-Core/Other			Core/Regular	Non-Core/Other		
Outcome 1 - Governance and Rule of Law	2,617,223	5,810,369	8,427,592	4,585,610	2,546,442	4,998,582	7,545,023	90%
Outcome 2 - Social Cohesion	1,293,084	5,754,460	7,047,544	4,669,000	1,292,976	5,441,707	6,734,683	96%
Outcome 3 - Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture	1,253,183	1,729,739	2,982,922	2,964,000	862,183	1,699,578	2,561,761	86%
Outcome 4 - DRR and Climate Change	256,130	2,329,154	2,585,284	1,720,000	160,287	1,644,657	1,804,944	70%
Programm of Cooperation: TOTAL in USD	5,419,621	15,623,722	21,043,342	13,938,610	4,861,888	13,784,523	18,646,411	89%

Outcomes/Outputs	Available Budget	Total Expenditures	Delivery Rate (%)
Output 1.1 Human Rights	326,318	325,141	100%
Output 1.2 Anti-corruption and Rule of Law	1,415,847	1,064,134	75%
Output 1.3 Local Governance	2,728,357	2,292,046	84%
Output 1.4 Access to Justice	291,526	291,526	100%
Output 1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Responsive Budgeting	138,404	117,584	85%
Output 1.6 Migration and Asylum	3,527,140	3,454,592	98%
Outcome 1 Governance and Rule of Law	8,427,592	7,545,023	90%
Output 2.1 Health	1,135,611	1,119,049	99%
Output 2.2 Education	824,003	680,688	83%
Output 2.3 Social Inclusion and Protection	3,068,998	3,024,173	99%
Output 2.4 Child Protection	724,651	724,651	100%
Output 2.5 Gender Based Violence	1,294,281	1,186,122	92%
Outcome 2 Social Cohesion	7,047,544	6,734,683	96%
Output 3.1 Economic Development	405,000	384,000	95%
Output 3.2 Labour	1,473,922	1,443,761	98%
Output 3.3 Agriculture and Rural Development	1,090,000	720,000	66%
Output 3.4 Culture	14,000	14,000	100%
Outcome 3 Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture	2,982,922	2,561,761	86%
Output 4.1 DRR and Climate Change	1,029,038	701,273	68%
Output 4.2 Natural Resources	1,556,246	1,103,671	71%
Outcome 4 DRR and Climate Change	2,585,284	1,804,944	70%
TOTAL	21,043,342	18,646,411	89%

Annex D: National implementing partners, participating UN organisations, funds and programmes, and their acronyms and websites

KEY IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Central Election Commission	www.cec.org.al
Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination	www.kmd.al
Department for Development and Good Governance	www.kryeministria.al
National Institute of Statistics	www.instat.gov.al
People's Advocate	www.avokatipopullit.gov.al
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	www.bujqesia.gov.al
Ministry of Culture	www.kultura.gov.al
Ministry of Defence	www.mbrojtja.gov.al
Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth	www.arsimi.gov.al
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs	punetejashtme.gov.al/en
Ministry of Finance and Economy	www.financa.gov.al
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	www.shendetesia.gov.al
Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy	www.infrastruktura.gov.al
Ministry of Interior	www.punetebrendshme.gov.al
Ministry of Justice	www.drejtesia.gov.al
Ministry of Tourism and Environment	turizmi.gov.al
Minister of State for Diaspora	www.diaspora.gov.al
Minister of State for Entrepreneurs	www.sipermarrja.gov.al
Minister of State for Relations with Parliament	www.kryeministria.al

PARTICIPATING UN ORGANISATIONS, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States	www.fao.org
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	www.iaea.org
ILO	International Labour Organisation	www.ilo.org
IOM	International Organisation for Migration	www.iom.int
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	www.unctad.org
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	www.undp.org
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	www.unece.org
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme	www.unep.org
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation	www.unesco.org
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	www.unfpa.org
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	www.unhcr.org
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	www.unicef.org
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization	www.unido.org
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	www.unodc.org
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	www.unwomen.org
WHO	World Health Organisation	www.who.int

Annex E: UN and UN-supported organisations publications in 2019

- Towards strengthen governance of the shared trans-boundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region; Final report, UNESCO
- National Population Survey: Violence against Women and Girls in Albania, UNDP
<http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/national-population-survey--violence-against-women-and-girls-in-.html>
- Infographics DV survey, UNDP
<http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/national-population-survey--violence-against-women-and-girls-in-.html>
- Research brief Help-Seeking Behaviors of Women Who Experience Violence in Albania, UNDP
http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/help-seeking-behaviours-of-women-who-experience-violence-in-alba.html
- Research brief Impact of Domestic Violence in Women and Children in Albania, UNDP
http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/impact-of-domestic-violence-on-women-and-children-in-albania.html
- Research brief, Violence Against Women in Albania: In Comparison to the European Union, UNDP
http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/violence-against-women-in-albania--in-comparison-to-the-european.html
- Research brief Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania: Date Comparisons From 2007, 2013 to 2018, UNDP
http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/violence-against-women-and-girls-in-albania--data-comparisons-fr.html
- Final Report 2019 Analysis of the functioning of the coordinated referral mechanism of cases of domestic violence at the local level in Albania, UNDP
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- Sexual Harassment and other Forms of Gender based Violence in Urban Spaces in Albania, UN WOMEN
<https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/05/sexual-harassment-gender-based-violence-in-albania>
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- Voices, UN WOMEN
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- Report of CSOs for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Albania, UN WOMEN
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- Infosheet: Perceptions On Violence Against Women And Girls, UN WOMEN
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- Quantitative and Qualitative Data on violence against women, UN WOMEN
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- The intersection of Gender equality and Education in South-East Europe: a regional situation analysis of the Nexus between SDG4 (Quality Education) and SDG5 (Gender equality), UNESCO
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<https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/appraisal-pre-university-education-strategy-2014-2020>
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<https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/12/2020-buxheti-per-qytetarin>
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- U-reporters response to the poll on International Women's Day, UNICEF
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- National Action Plan for the Control HIV and TB 2020-2025, WHO
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- Operational Plan for the Integration of TB services in Primary Health Care, WHO
- Mission Report: Technical Assistance and Training on Management of TB medicines and diagnostics in Albania, WHO
- Mission Report: Improvement of the Quality of the TB Lab and Health facilities aim to enhance Infection Control and improving biosafety for TB facilities, WHO
- Mission Report: TB laboratory diagnostic algorithm in Albania, WHO
- Mission Report on the review of relevant and priority national HIV policies regarding HIV surveillance, testing, treatment and care, WHO
- TB and HIV care guidelines (9 guidelines), WHO: Management and treatment of MDR-TB; Management and treatment of TB and LTBI; Management and treatment of TB in children; TB medicine management guideline; TB and MDR-TB infection control guidelines and screening policy for health workforce; Operational Protocol on Patient-Centered Services for TB within PHC; HIV treatment Protocol and ARV regimen; Management of HIV/TB and HIV/Hepatitis; National data collection and reporting in the frameworks of regional and global level reporting on HIV
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- Leishmaniasis Action Plan 2020-2022, WHO
- Guideline for the Surveillance of Leishmaniasis, WHO
- Guideline for the Case Management of Visceral and Cutaneous Leishmaniasis, WHO
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- Assessment of the challenges and needs of PHC providers in meeting the requirement of Mental Health legislation in Albania, WHO
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<https://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Kartolina-OOSC-shqip-2020.pdf>
- Guide for the practical implementation of the Council of Minister’s Decision no. 666 on ‘Awarding financial support for children who are out of school or at risk of dropping out from schools.
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- Budget briefs for social care services
<https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2451/file>
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- Guideline for preparation of municipal Standard Operating Procedures, UNDP
- Detailed Standard Action and Monitoring Plans for collection of tax on building and cleaning tariff for Municipalities of: Belsh, Bulqize, Cerrik, Delvine, Divjake, Dropull, Finiq, Fushe-Arrez, Has, Himare, Kelcyre, Kolonje, Konispol, Kurbin, Libohove, Librazhd, Maliq, Mallakster, Memaliaj, Mirdite, Peqin, Prrenjas, Pustec, Roskovec, Rrogozhine, Selenice, Skrapar, Tepelene, Ura-Vajgurore.
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