

# Joint SDG Fund

## Template for the Joint Programme Annual Progress Report

### SDG FINANCING PORTFOLIO – COMPONENT 1

## Cover page

**Reporting period: June 30 – December 31, 2020**

**Country: Albania**

**Joint Programme (JP) title: Strategic Policy Options for SDG Financing**

**Short title: Support to SDG Financing**

**Start date** (month/year): **June 2020**

**End date** (month/year): **June 2022**

**RC** (name): Fiona McCluney

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**List of PUNOs: UNDP, UNICEF, ILO**

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**Budget** (Joint SDG Fund contribution): **USD 855,000**

**Overall budget** (with co-funding): **USD 1,149,205**

**Annual Financial Delivery Rate: 5.2 %**

**Rate of Committed Funding : 7.6%**

	Expenditures January 2020 - December 2020	Committed resources January 2020- December 2020	Transferred Funds January 2020- December 2020	Annual Financial Delivery Rate (%)	Committed Funding Rate(%)
<b>PUNO 1</b> <b>UNICEF</b>	6165.3	19440	130000	0.052338548	0.076031241
<b>PUNO 2</b> <b>ILO</b>	6988.67	653	135,000.00		
<b>PUNO 3</b> <b>UNDP</b>	9,194.59	12372.34	162000		
<b>PUNO 4</b>					
<b>PUNO 5</b>					

### **Short description of the Joint Programme** (max 1 paragraph):

The overall objective of the Joint Programme (JP) is to progressively increase SDG-related financing in Albania by increasing national and local level capacities in identifying fiscal space and finding new innovative solutions for financing. This JP aims to provide technical assistance and work with the government to identify and integrate more equitable and adequate financing for SDGs in the national budgetary framework. The implementation of the programme is expected to provide large scale results, reaching the most vulnerable part of the Albanian society, in particular children and women in the poorest locations.

### **Executive summary**

The first 6 months of the Joint Programme “Support to SDG Financing” have included preparations of the project activities and rollout of the initial activities. At the policy level, the project assists the government in integrating the national financing for social protection floors into national policy, building upon the on-going UN-wide efforts, especially the work carried out under the Joint SDG Fund project on improving municipal social protection service delivery. The key achievement in this regard is the preparation of Budget Briefs for Education, Health and Social Protection sectors. The main purpose of the Budget Briefs is to generate evidence, improve understanding around trends in planning and executing the budget in the select three sectors, and evidence-based advocacy to influence public spending for the three social sectors. By analyzing and monitoring budget allocations in the sectors, longer term objective is to influence the budget planning in the sectors to ensure a more equitable allocation of resources for the benefit of children and women. The Budget Briefs will be published during the first quarter of 2021, will be widely disseminated for national and international audiences and will serve as an important tool to engage in budget advocacy for allocation of funds for the benefit of children with line Ministries and with Parliament of Albania.

At the macro level, the JP identifies and assesses options to catalyze financing of unfunded mandates at the local government units and identify innovative approaches, tools and other financing mechanisms to pilot and evaluate the impact of fiscal policies related to social protection. In this regard, the JP is in the process of preparing a budget analysis of SDG related spending in Albania, assisting in ensuring that government’s spending supports the achievement of SDGs, reduces inequalities and addresses leaving no one behind.

At the capacity-support level, the JP supports selected Albanian institutions to articulate, implement and review budgets that reflect increasing SDG related spending. In this regard, work has been initiated with the Parliament of Albania and three events were convened during the reporting phase.

After the approval of the project in July 2020, the implementation of this JP faced challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic. UN agencies in Albania implementing this project had to urgently respond to this unprecedented global health and economic crisis. Both the UN agencies and project partners had limited time for the smooth start-up and planning of this project. Response to the evolving Covid-19 situation has remained a priority of the government partners which has impacted the time and focus to be allocated to the project activities. This has caused some delays in the planned activities.

Looking forward to the next 12 months, in addition to the prolonged health and economic crisis due to Covid-19, it is necessary to take into consideration the upcoming parliamentary elections in April 2021. It is expected that the country may enter politically turbulent times once the election campaigning begins. Hence, the upcoming elections may slowdown the implementation of the planned activities and some of the activities may have to be re-scheduled to start/continue after the elections.

## A. Annual Progress (MAXIMUM 7 PAGES)

### A.1 The overview of progress and challenges

#### A.1.1. Overall self-assessment

Provide a self-assessment on the overall JP progress in the last year.

- Above expectations (expected annual results fully achieved and additional progress made)
- On track (expected annual results achieved)
- Satisfactory (majority of expected annual results achieved)
- Not-satisfactory (majority of expected annual results not yet achieved)

The first 6 months of the Joint Programme "Support to SDG Financing" have included preparations of the project activities and the rollout of the initial activities. The start of the project coincided with the preparation of the Covid-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan for Albania, which occupied the UNCT and led to somewhat later start than anticipated initially. Despite the competing priorities and the challenging situation with the Covid-19 pandemic, progress has been made across the output areas, to achieve the overall outcome of boosting domestic financing for SDGs.

#### A.1.2. Overall progress and key developments to date

##### **1) governance and coordination;**

An inter-agency coordination group was established between ILO, UNICEF, UNDP Albania, with the support of the RCO, UN Women and UNFPA, to agree on the scope of the work plan and the coordination mechanism.

UNICEF, UN WOMEN and ILO have already discussed and agreed on a timeline to progress in the activities outlined under output 1. These activities will build upon current work that has been undertaken in the framework of the first SDG support joint programme; upon completion of two important assessments that analyse fiscal space for social protection and review social protection systems, the three organizations have agreed to start talking to the government to develop a road map towards developing a national definition and policy on social protection floor. The road ahead is challenging given the economic crisis brought upon by COVID-19, but advocacy and preparatory work has started. UNICEF and UN Women finalized the UN-to-UN agreement necessary to start the work, whereas UNDP and UNFPA are concluding their UN-to-UN agreement. UNICEF has advocated with the government and ensured alignment between government plans and the activities planned under the SDG supported programme. Further, the Economic Reform Programme 2021 – 2023 is an important document that outlines the key actions necessary to advance national reforms has already included the need to assess the effectiveness of social assistance scheme.

##### **2) research, assessments and feasibility studies on SDG financing;**

Part of the initial phase of the project which foresees number of assessments and feasibility studies to generate the missing evidence and studies on SDG financing, UN Women initiated the development of the Assessment of the impact of public investment in childcare on poverty reduction, human development and gender equality, which was also consulted with the MoFE. Preparatory work was also finalized for rolling out a study on the impact of public investment in childcare and child and family allowance on poverty reduction, human development and gender equality in Albania. This assessment is expected to provide data and evidence on the costs and benefits in the institutionalization of social care, particularly childcare services and the simulations of their fiscal revenue effects and impact on poverty reduction, human development and gender equality.

Improved public finance is one of the critical enabling factors for realizing children's rights, more so in Albania, region where domestic resources play the predominant role in funding the provision of services such as education, health, and social protection. Gaps in adequacy of public expenditure, inefficiencies in public budgeting and inequity in the distribution of resources underlie many of the gaps and inequities in service provision, particularly for the most vulnerable children in the region. Public finance and domestic resource mobilization are identified through the SDG indicators relating to "means of implementation", the Addis Ababa

Action Agenda on Financing for Development. In line with the international best practices, as well as UNICEF's Guidelines for Developing Budget Briefs, UNICEF finalized Budget Briefs for Education, Health and Social Protection sectors, main purpose being to generate evidence, improve understanding around trends in planning and executing the budget in the select three sectors, and evidence-based advocacy to influence public spending for the three social sectors. By analyzing and monitoring budget allocations in the sectors, longer term objective is to influence the budget planning in the sectors to ensure a more equitable allocation of resources for the benefit of children and women. The Budget Briefs will be published during the first quarter of 2021, will be widely disseminated for national and international audiences and will serve as an important tool to engage in budget advocacy for allocation of funds for the benefit of children with line Ministries and with Parliament of Albania.

Terms of References were prepared and agreed with the Ministry of Finance and Economy to prepare an analysis on Financing Sustainable Development Goals in Albania. The work is now on-going and the analysis will be finalised during the first quarter of 2021, and it will provide a baseline of actual spending by SDGs, showcase some alignment/misalignment between policy priorities and national budgeting as well as provide a support tool to enable the Government to improve prioritization, efficiency and effectiveness of all public resources against SDGs and to develop an equity-based funding model for SDGs in Albania.

### **3) financial policy development and financial advocacy activities;**

The financial policy development work within this project is still at the initial stage, building on the analytical work carried out under the Joint SDG Fund project on improving municipal social protection service delivery. The advocacy activities to date have revolved around events organised and will be scaled up when there are more results to communicate and advocate for.

### **4) capacity building for key stakeholders on SDG financing;**

Capacity building efforts so far have focused on parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, with a specific focus on mainstreaming the SDGs within the parliamentary mechanisms and reviewing legislation through SDGs lens as well as SDG financing and tracking of SDG budget allocations. In addition, self-assessment on the SDG preparedness among the MPs and exchange of best practices has been initiated in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

### **5) JP programme management (e.g. establishment of JP oversight committee, hiring or key personnel and consultants); and**

ILO recruited a project assistant (G4) in September 2020 to support the implementation of project activities. Unfortunately, she resigned in December and ILO is now hiring again. UNDP is in the process of recruiting a project officer that will be supporting the implementation of activities.

### **6) mobilization of financial resources (co-funding and co-financing)**

Working to support the national authorities develop technical solutions for a social protection floor and making it work for children, is one of the key priorities for UNICEF and this is why UNICEF has matched about 30,000 of USD from its core resources for 2021.

#### A.1.3. Changes

Was the JP document modified in the past year?

- Yes  
 No

## **No changes have been introduced in the JP in the past year.**

### A.1.4. Challenges

Did the JP face any major challenges in the past year?

- Yes  
 No

The earthquake of November 2019, the rapidly evolving Covid-19 situation in Albania, including various containment measures have affected the implementation of the project activities. COVID-19 overburdened the work of national authorities and did create some uncertainty over social spending. The extent of involvement of national authorities was lower than expected as the Ministry of Health and Social Protection lacks the financial and human resources necessary to deal with initiatives or programmes that go beyond the Covid-19. The response to evolving Covid-19 situation remains a priority of the government partners which may negatively impact the time and focus they can allocate to the project activities.

On the other hand, COVID19 crisis revealed the necessity of a strong social protection system which is adequately financed which makes the rationale for the project proposal stronger. UN agencies have also made the case to advance the work in developing social protection floors on the UN recovery plan as well.

In addition to the challenges created by Covid-19, with the upcoming elections, the political atmosphere is tense. While there is broad consensus on the main political opportunities and challenges that Albania faces, the deep polarisation of the political class presents obstacles to progress. Conflict over each step of reform in areas such as election administration, judicial reform implementation and main national investment priorities dominate public debate, squeezing out longer term sustainable development policymaking.

### A.1.5. COVID-19 and other strategic alignment

The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened the existing vulnerabilities and inequalities in Albania. It is against this backdrop that increasing SDG-related financing and developing a national strategy for financing social protection floors has become increasingly important and yet, more challenging due to the economic downturn and tightening fiscal space. Further, Covid-19 has impacted women and girls in Albania disproportionately<sup>1</sup>, and underlined the need for future activities to put a special emphasis on women and gender equality, ensuring that any fiscal space is used to mitigate the adverse impacts on women and enable a gender-equitable economic recovery over the medium to long-term.

The budget analysis on SDG related spending in actual budget allocations and expenditures for 2018-2020, which is currently being prepared, will give special attention to the identification of Covid-19 related budget implications.

In addition, the JP is aligned with the Socioeconomic Recovery Plan (SERP), which was finalised in July 2020, supporting the government in its recovery efforts by focusing on health response and systems strengthening, pro-poor social systems, resilient economies, macro-economic and fiscal management, and social cohesion and community resilience.

## **A.2 Update on priority issues**

### A.2.1. Progress on Integrated National Financing Framework/SDG financing building blocks

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2020/07/factsheet-albania-fin-min.pdf?la=en&vs=1208>

Implementation stages	Planned (0%)	Emerging (1-49% progress)	Advancing (50-99% progress)	Complete (100% progress)	Previously completed	Not applicable	Comments/ Notes
<b>1. Inception phase</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2. Assessment &amp; diagnostics</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>3. Financing strategy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>4. Monitoring &amp; review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>5. Governance &amp; coordination</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Budget analysis on SDG related spending in the national budget is ongoing. This analysis will be one of the building blocks for the SDG financing framework.

#### A.2.2. Thematic focus

- |  |   |                                       |                                     |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cross-cutting    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender           | <input type="checkbox"/> Health & nutrition           | <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children & youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change & nature      | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue economy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... |

#### A.2.3. Gender marker

Did your Joint Programme feature Gender Results in the past year at the outcome or output level?

- Yes  
 No

Briefly explain:

The Joint Programme is in its early stage of implementation and therefore no output or outcome level gender specific results can be reported. However, gender has been closely considered in the overall planning and design of future interventions under the programme.

*Total average scoring of the JP's gender marker as defined in the JP document:*

As per the ProDoc the overall Gender Marker Score of the project is 2.

*If the score is lower than 2 what measures are you planning to take to address this scoring which is below the minimum requirements of the Fund?*

N/a

*Briefly explain how you applied the Gender Marker in the last year, and/or other ways in which you mainstreamed gender in JP implementation.*

Participating agencies have mainstreamed gender perspective in initial research and policy analyses conducted, collecting and analyzing sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics. These analyses include: Budget analysis of SDG related spending in Albania.

Coordination and consultation with the National Gender Machinery i.e. the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, as well as with Ministry of Finance and Economy as lead institution on gender responsive budgeting, in planning of programme interventions and upcoming events.

UN Women finalized the preparatory work i.e. design of Terms of reference for conducting a study which plays strong focus on the care economy and recognizing the value of unpaid care work, which is one of important approaches for promoting investment in public services, infrastructure and social protection policies that reduce inequalities and promote the empowerment of women.

#### A.2.4. Vulnerable groups

Will the JP directly impact marginalized and/or vulnerable groups through a dedicated outcome or output?

Yes

No

List of marginalized and vulnerable groups	Dedicated Outcome	Dedicated Output	Status (planned/in progress/complete)
Women and girls	Institutional capacities at national and local level are supported to develop feasible solutions and identify fiscal space to progressively increase SDG-related spending for women, men, boys and children in Albania.	1	In progress
Children		1	In progress
Youth		1	In progress
Persons with disabilities		1	In progress
Older persons		1, 2	In progress
Minorities (incl. ethnic, religious, linguistic...)		1	In progress
Indigenous peoples			
Persons of African Descent (when understood as separate from minorities)			
Migrants			
Refugees & asylum seekers			
Internally displaced persons			
Stateless persons			
Persons deprived of their liberty			
Peasants and rural workers			
Human rights defenders (incl. NGOs, journalists, union leaders, whistleblowers...)			
LGBTI persons (sexual orientation and gender identity)			
Persons affected by (HIV/AIDS, leprosy...)			
Persons with albinism			
Victims or relatives of victims of enforced disappearances			
Victims of (slavery, torture, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse...)			

#### A.2.5. Learning and sharing

During the webinar on the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of parliaments in SDG implementation, on 11 December 2020, best practices and experiences were shared by Ms. Petra Bayr from Austria, MP and Member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, and Ms. Silvia Dinică from Romania, Senator and Member of the Bureau of the IPU Standing Committee on Sustainable Development.

Another webinar was held with parliamentary staff on 18 December 2020, to discuss the SDG self-assessment exercise and to share information and good practices identified by the National Assembly of Serbia. Mr. Vladimir D. Filipović from the National Assembly of Serbia facilitated the lively discussion during the webinar.

### A.3 Update on events and partnerships

#### A.3.1. Events

Type of event	Yes	No	Comments
JP launch event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>SC and launch event will take place on 3 February 2021.</i>
Annual donors' event*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Partners' event **	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

\*the Fund donor countries are Denmark, European Union, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. Please note that this event can be held together with a launch event or partners' event.

\*\* Key advocacy outreach events with high level JP partners.

#### A.3.2. Partnerships

Did your Joint Programme facilitate engagement with diverse stakeholders (e.g. parliamentarians, civil society, IFIs, bilateral/multilateral actor, private sector)?

- Yes  
 No

Since the project started in July 2020, the JP has initiated and launched a partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in line with the objectives set up in A/RES/74/304. This strategic partnership has enriched the sharing of best practices among Parliamentarians and provided a new platform for the Parliamentarians to exchange on SDG implementation related topics.

#### A.3.3. Additional financing

- Yes  
 No

Source of funding	Yes	No	Co-funding or Co-financing?	Name of organization	Amount (USD)	Comments
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Donors/IFIs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
PUNOs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Co-funding</i>	<i>UNICEF</i>	<i>30,000</i>	
Other partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### A.4 Strategic communications

Did the JP develop a strategic communications plan?

- Yes  
 No

The strategic communications plan will be prepared in February/March 2021.

During the first 6 months, communication and advocacy efforts have revolved around events organised under the output 4 (see Annex 3 for more details).

## B. Annual Results (MAXIMUM 3 PAGES)

### B.1. SDG acceleration

List up to 3 main SDG targets that your Joint Programme primarily focused in 2020.

**SDG 10: Reduced inequalities (10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**

**SDG 1: No poverty (1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable)**

**SDG 16: Peace, justice, and accountable institutions (16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all level)**

The programme aims to work with Albanian Institutions and develop feasible solutions to boost SDG domestic financing and eventually increase national investment for SDGs, notably for SDG 1, 5, 10, 16. Such change will come through providing evidence on the costs on noninvestment, through creating tools for financing policies and measuring regularly the impact, through strengthening the capacities of the SDG financing institutions, enabling a continuous national dialogue on SDG financing in Albania.

The strategy of the programme builds on complementarities and brings together the added value and action synergies of the UN agencies participating in this programme – UNDP, UNICEF, ILO in close collaboration with UNFPA, UN WOMEN– combined with the strong commitment by the government to address the challenges of progressively increasing SDG-relating spending for women, men, boys and children in Albania. The initial activities carried out are the building blocks for implementing the work plan in line with the theory of change. First activities have been carried out to increase national capacities (Parliament), to prepare a baseline analysis on the current SDG spending from the national budget and budget briefs on Education, Health and Social Protection sectors, to generate evidence, improve understanding around trends in planning and executing the budget in the select three sectors, and evidence-based advocacy to influence public spending for the three social sectors.

## **B.2. Contribution to Fund’s global results**

- Fill out Annex 1-1 and Annex 1-2, and provide below a short narrative on how the JP contributed to the Fund’s global Outcome and Output last year. Please refer to the targets written in the JP ProDoc for the last year. If you haven’t set a target for the global Outcome and Output of the Fund in the submission of your JP ProDoc, please do so in Annex 1-1 and Annex 1-2.

No results towards the global outcome are available after the first six months of the project.

- In case you are not able to derive a target for the Outcome please suggest 01 alternative Outcome and explain your suggestion below. This question is part of a work in progress to revise the Joint SDG Fund’s M&E framework which might be modified in 2021.

N/A

## **B.3. JP Outputs and outcomes**

- Achievement of outputs

The first six months of the Joint Project “Support to SDG financing” were marked by the preparations for the implementation of the project activities and roll-out of the initial activities. The start of the project coincided with the preparation of the Covid-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan for Albania, which occupied the UNCT and led to somewhat later start than anticipated initially. Despite the initial delay and the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, progress has been made across the output areas, to achieve the overall outcome of boosting domestic financing for SDGs.

**Output 1: A national strategy for financing comprehensive social protection floors is developed, discussed nationally and proposal are ready for its integration in the MTBG through national dialogue.**

Preparatory work was finalized for rolling out a study on the impact of public investment in childcare and child and family allowance on poverty reduction, human development and gender equality in Albania. This assessment is expected to provide data and evidence on the costs and benefits in the institutionalization of

social care, particularly childcare services and the simulations of their fiscal revenue effects and impact on poverty reduction, human development and gender equality.

The Terms of reference were consulted with MoFE for their contribution and endorsement ahead of initiating the recruitment process, and the same will be carried in close coordination with MoHSP.

**Output 2: Feasible options are identified and agreed with government authorities to catalyse financing of unfunded mandates at the local level**

Work in this output has not started yet.

**Output 3: Innovative approaches and tools are developed to pilot and evaluate the impact of fiscal policies**

Work in this output has not started yet.

**Output 4: Public institutions' capacities are enhanced to articulate, implement and review resilient and SDG-proof spending**

Terms of References were prepared and agreed with the Ministry of Finance and Economy to prepare an analysis on Financing Sustainable Development Goals in Albania. Two consultants started to work on the report in November and are expected deliver a draft report in January 2021. The report will provide a baseline of actual spending by SDGs, showcasing some alignment/misalignment between policy priorities and national budgeting as well as providing a support tool to enable the Government to improve prioritization, efficiency and effectiveness of all public resources against SDGs and to develop an equity-based funding model for SDGs in Albania.

The activities to increase the capacities in high-level decision making on SDG budgeting commenced in July 2020, especially in regard to the Parliament of Albania. The RC participated in the meeting of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development in July 2020 and briefed on the collaboration needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and financing SDGs. The meeting was also attended by the Office of the Prime Minister and INSTAT, the national statistical agency.

Further, an information webinar on the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of Parliaments in SDG implementation was organized jointly by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development, RCO and IPU in December 2020. The specific focus of this webinar was mainstreaming the SDGs within the parliamentary mechanisms and reviewing legislation through SDGs lens as well as SDG financing and tracking of SDG budget allocations.

Within the framework of this project, the RCO has partnered with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to support the exchange of best practices and learning through a self-assessment on the SDG preparedness among the MPs. This exercise started also in December and will continue in the first quarter of 2021. Due to the upcoming elections, the exercise will also involve and engage with the parliamentary staff to ensure and support continuity.

- Achievement of outcomes

The JP is still in its initial phase, planning and rolling out activities. Therefore, outcomes to be reported after the first 6 months of project implementation remain limited. Institutional capacities have been strengthened, especially vis-à-vis parliament, on the role that parliamentarians play in implementing national development goals, ensuring that progress is made on the 2030 Agenda, particularly on monitoring process, and ensuring that the Agenda is financed and reaches the most local of levels throughout Albania.

## **B.4. Strategic Documents**

Did the JP produce strategic documents in the last year (policy, strategies, analyses/assessments, methodological documents, and other relevant documents)?

- Yes  
 No

- Inception report on Supporting the Government of Albania to prepare a budget analysis of SDG related spending in Albania
- Parliaments and Sustainable Development Goals – a self-assessment toolkit (translated to Albanian)

## C. Plan for the Next Year of implementation (MAXIMUM 2 PAGES)

### C.1 Upcoming activities

**Output 1 A national strategy for financing comprehensive social protection floors is developed, discussed nationally and proposal are ready for its integration in the MTBG through national dialogue.**

- Impact analysis of public investment in childcare and child and family allowance on poverty reduction, human development and gender equality, including costing and financing options for social protection benefits
- Assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of cash assistance targeting poverty (economic aid) to support families and children cope with the multiple effects of poverty and vulnerability, and policy dialogue for increase in investments and expenditures on the social protection benefits

Both activities will be developed jointly by UNICEF, UN WOMEN and ILO. The outputs produced in the framework of the other SDG project on social protection LNOB like (1) Social Protection system in Albania, (2) Fiscal Space for Social Protection in Albania, as well as (3) the capacity building activities conducted with the representatives from SOCPRO and Finance Departments in the 6 piloting municipalities (Tirana, Kamez, Puke, Rrogozhina, Pogradec and Devoll) will also serve as the basis on looking into options for financing social protection.

**Output 2: Feasible options are identified and agreed with government authorities to catalyse financing of unfunded mandates at the local level**

- Review budgets and assess fiscal space to increase spending in childcare infrastructure by undertaking simulation of such investment for gender-disaggregated employment creation, poverty reduction and unpaid work time reduction. (UN WOMEN)
- Definition and scope of unfunded mandates at the central and local level - aligned with the European Union (UNDP)

**Output 3: Innovative approaches and tools are developed to pilot and evaluate the impact of fiscal policies**

- Scoping of microsimulation and the possibility of adapting it to Albania (UNDP)
- Initiation of an innovative tool on evaluating the impact of fiscal policies.

**Output 4: Public institutions' capacities are enhanced to articulate, implement and review resilient and SDG-proof spending**

- Work together with the beneficiaries to start the preparations of the SDG Investment Framework;
- Provide training and support for various commissions at the Parliament on SDG financing and budget oversight and complete the SDG self-assessment in collaboration with the IPU.

*A brief narrative about the JP's specifics expected annual results (outputs and outcomes) for 1 Jan 2021 – 31 Dec 2021:*

For 1 Jan 2021 – 31 Dec 2021, the implementation of the programme is expected to provide its initial results, reaching the most vulnerable part of the Albanian society. The approach of the programme aims to achieve sustainable results for the Albanian government through improved policy options to encourage allocation of a higher level of resources to cope with the challenges of financing social protection and other relevant stakeholders in the process. In 2021, the work will focus first on establishing a baseline on the SDG spending, preparing impact analysis, for example on public investment in childcare and child and family allowance and financing options for social protection benefits.

It is expected that towards end of 2021 work will be well underway on the development of the SDG investment framework and the national strategy for financing comprehensive social protection floors.

## **C.2. Expected changes**

The work plan and results framework remain the same. However, due to Covid-19 and the upcoming elections some delays are anticipated. A strong political commitment from the local authorities is required for all the activities envisaged in the work plan, and therefore election period will likely be a challenging time for the implementation of the project activities.

## **C.3. Risks and mitigation measures**

Are there any changes made/expected to be made to the Risk Matrix?

- Yes  
 No

The risks have been well analysed in the project document, including the economic downturn due to Covid-19 and possible changes in portfolio and responsibilities of the key government interlocutors due to elections. Similarly, the mitigation measures are well defined and up to date. The prolonged economic downturn and the recent wave of infections that hit Europe raises a concern. Close monitoring of the work plan is needed for unexpected changes which could hinder the implementation of the participatory and consultative process in the implementation of the project.

Albania will have parliamentary elections in April 2021, and the country may be entering politically turbulent times in the next quarters. Hence, the upcoming elections may impact the implementation of the planned activities and cause some delays, especially in regard to the activities aimed at the parliamentarians.

The planned mitigation measures include flexible scheduling of the activities, anticipating that there might be some delays before the elections as well as measures to organize meetings on hybrid/online platforms.

## Annex 1: Consolidated Annual Results

### 1. JP contribution to global programmatic results (annual)

Joint SDG Fund Global Outcome 2: Additional financing leveraged to accelerate SDG achievement ( Update table below )

Indicators	Target 2020	Result 2020	Target 2021
2.1: Ratio of financing for integrated multi-sectoral solutions leveraged in terms of scope(for other/ additional sector/s or through new sources/means)	2	0	3
2.2: Ratio of financing for integrated multi-sectoral solutions leveraged in terms of scale(for the same multi-sectoral solution.)	1	0	2

Joint SDG Fund Global Output 4: Integrated financing strategies for accelerating SDG progress implemented (Update table below and provide details as requested)

Indicators	Target 2020	Result 2020	Target 2021	List of strategies/ frameworks developed
4.1: #of integrated financing strategies that were tested (disaggregated by % successful / unsuccessful)	1	0	2	
4.2: #of integrated financing strategies that have been implemented with partners in lead disaggregated by (1) government/public partners (2) civil society partners and (3) private sector partners	1	0	2	
4.3: # of functioning partnership frameworks for integrated financing strategies to accelerate progress on SDGs made operational	3	0	4	

## 2. Selected global performance indicators (annual)

2.1. Did your Joint Programme contribute to the improvement of the overall UNCT coherence in 2020?

- Yes, considerably contributed  
 Yes, contributed  
 No

Explain briefly: The preparatory work for initiating and planning for the activities envisaged in the JP has led to a closer collaboration with the PUNOs and partner agencies.

2.2. Did your Joint Programme contribute to reduced transaction costs for the participating UN agencies in interaction with national/regional and local authorities and/or public entities compared to other Joint Programmes?

- Yes,  
 No  
 N/A (if there are no other joint programmes in the country)

Explain briefly:

2.3. Was your Joint Programme aligned with the UNCT Results Groups in 2020?

- Yes  
 No

Explain briefly:

## 3. Results as per JP Results Framework (annual)

Result / Indicators	Baseline	Expected 2020 Target	2020 Result	Reasons for variance from planned target (if any)	Expected 2021 target	Expected final target (if different from 2021)
Outcome 1: Institutional capacities at national and local level are supported to develop feasible solutions and identify fiscal space to progressively increase SDG-relating spending for women, men, boys and children in Albania.						
Outcome 1 indicator: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, gender, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury	No available data for this indicator. Baseline for 2019 at the national level to be calculated as number of various groups benefitting from different	National strategy with feasible options for financing a social protection floor	National Dialogue started with national authorities on the strengths and weaknesses of the current social protection system.	The work for the JP started only in September 2020, and the achievement of this result would be more realistic by end of 2021.	Feasibility study of innovative financing mechanisms and instruments that catalyse public and private investment in social protection	

victims and the poor and the vulnerable.	social protection schemes					
Outcome 1 indicator: Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)	50% (including culture)	51%			52%	
Output 1.1 A national strategy for financing comprehensive social protection floors is developed, discussed nationally and ready to be integrated in the MTBG through national dialogue.						
Output 1.1 indicator: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	No available data for this indicator. Baseline for 2019 at the national level to be calculated as number of various groups benefitting from different social protection schemes	National strategy with feasible options for financing a social protection floor	National Dialogue started with national authorities on the strengths and weaknesses of the current social protection system.	The work for the JP started only in September 2020, and the achievement of this result would be more realistic by end of 2021.	Assessment of the impact of the poverty targeted cash assistance	
Output 1.1 indicator: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.	14.3%	-0.35%			-0.35%	
Output 1.2: Feasible options are identified and agreed with Government Authorities to catalyse financing of unfunded mandates at local government units						
Mapping of gaps from unfunded mandates and costs	N/A	Legislation screening and EU acquis compliance assessment			Capacities at selected municipalities to enable financing of delegated functions are assessed	

Social impact of intergovernmental transfers	N/A	Impact of local government's own resources and conditional transfers from the state budget on the amounts and stability of funding the social care services is assessed			Methodology to involve civil society organizations in monitoring the execution of intergovernmental transfers for social care services	
Output 1.3: Innovative approaches and tools (micro-simulation, behavioural insights) and other mechanisms are developed to pilot and evaluate the impact of fiscal policies						
Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups	No data for this indicator is currently available and its methodology is still under development	Behavioural experimentation to induce innovative thinking both in public service and the private sector			Technical support and training to use the models	
Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality	N/A	Euromod introduced and expertise provided to relevant institutions			Tax benefit microsimulation model designed to calculate the distributional effects of tax benefit policies on household incomes	
Output 1.4: Public institutions' capacities are enhanced to articulate, implement and review budgets that reflect increasing SDG related spending						
Formulation of policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, that progressively achieve greater equality.	No SDG financing mechanism in place	Preparation of SDG financing strategy	The work was not initiated in 2020 as preparatory work needs to be finalised first.	After the budget analysis on SDG spending has been finalised, the work on SDG Financing strategy will start. However, the timing will likely be only after the elections to ensure strong political commitment.	About 15 staff of the Ministry of Finance and Economy trained on SDG financing based on best practices	SDG Financing strategy prepared and adopted.
Capacities in high-level decision making improved on SDG budgeting	N/A	Members of SD sub-committee in parliament supported on	Members of SD sub-committee in parliament and parliamentary staff		Members of the parliament supported on SDG budgeting	

		mainstreaming SDGs in the national policy	members trained on SDG financing.			
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## Annex 2: List of strategic documents

1. Strategic documents that were produced by the JP

Title of the document	Date (month; year) when finalized	Brief description of the document and the role of the JP in finalizing it
- Inception report on Supporting the Government of Albania to prepare a budget analysis of SDG related spending in Albania	Feb 2021	The JP has recruited two consultants to carry out the analysis in close coordination with the JP.
- Parliaments and Sustainable Development Goals – a self-assessment toolkit (translated to Albanian)	Dec 2020	Support the capacity building activities with the Parliament, the toolkit was translated to Albania.

2. Strategic documents for which JP provided contribution

Title of the document	Date (month; year) when finalized	Brief description of the document and the role of the JP in finalizing it

### Annex 3: List of strategic communication documents

1. Have you created a strategic communication plan for the Joint Programme?

- Yes  
 No

Explain briefly: A dedicated meeting on programme strategic communication is planned to be held during the first week of February 2021 to agree on the key communication and visibility objectives. A strategic communication plan will be then developed by the team of communication officers of participation agencies and approved by the Steering Committee.

2. What percentage of the annual budget towards communications was utilized from the total budget? (Note that the entire JP comms budget must be min 5% of the total JP budget)

Explain briefly:

3. Have visibility outcomes increased due to the provided funding for JP strategic communications?

- Yes  
 No

Explain briefly:

4. Does the Country Profile Page on the Joint SDG Fund website contribute to your JP outreach?

- Yes  
 No

Explain briefly: Albania’s profile page on the Joint SDG Fund website provides a broader perspective of the country’s progress and needs towards achieving the SDGs while showcasing the areas of intervention and through joint programmes. Therefore, as will be elaborated in our forthcoming strategic communication plan, the Joint SDG Fund website will be a strong contributor to our programme outreach.

5. How many articles (interviews, human interest stories, press releases, expert insights, etc) about your JP were published by an external media outlet (Non-UN published)?

Total number: 1

Explain briefly: One of the event was live broadcasted in the official website of the Parliament of Albania.

6. How many articles (interviews, human interest stories, press releases, expert insights, etc) about the Joint Programme were published by the UNCT and JP PUNOs?

Total number: 1

Explain briefly: 1 press release

7. Have you received an increase of social media followers?

- Yes  
 No

Total number: (Not mandatory)

Explain briefly:

#### Multi-Media Faucets

Title of the document	Date	Brief description and hyperlink (if it exists)
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	<b>when finalized (MM/YY)</b>	

*Social Media Campaigns*

<b>Title of the document</b>	<b>Type (FB/Twitter/LinkedIn/Etc.)</b>	<b>Brief description and hyperlink (if it exists)</b>
Parliament Event on SDGs	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2894746604144760&amp;ref=watch_permalink">https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2894746604144760&amp;ref=watch_permalink</a>	Live Broadcast in the official page of parliament
Tweet on UN Albania Official Page	<a href="https://twitter.com/UN_Albania/status/1337393769461723143?s=20">https://twitter.com/UN_Albania/status/1337393769461723143?s=20</a>	Over 1000 impressions
Press Release	<a href="https://albania.un.org/en/108583-albanian-parliament-un-albania-and-ipu-promote-role-legislatives-implementation-sdgs">https://albania.un.org/en/108583-albanian-parliament-un-albania-and-ipu-promote-role-legislatives-implementation-sdgs</a>	

## Annex 4: Updated JP Risk Management Matrix

Risks	Risk Level: (Likelihood x Impact)	Likelihood: Certain - 5 Likely - 4 Possible - 3 Unlikely - 2 Rare - 1	Impact: Essential - 5 Major - 4 Moderate - 3 Minor - 2 Insignificant - 1	Mitigating measures	Responsible Org./Person
Contextual risks					
Changes in portfolio and responsibilities of the key actors (staff rotation and turnover, restructuring of departments) due to elections.	High (9)	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	UN agencies have long experience of operating under changing environments. Elections will have inevitable impact prior and after. Prior to the elections, UN agencies will be careful to plan carefully the timing of activities, so they do not get affected by the elections period. On the other hand, in the likelihood of change, just like in the past, the programme staff will establish immediate contacts with the new leadership and management right after the elections to ensure understanding of the interventions and ensure commitment for their continuity.	PUNOs

Worsening macro-economic environment	High (16)	Likely (4)	Major (4)	In view of the global pandemic, an economic slowdown is expected in 2020. PUNO management and programme staff will be following the situation close and would be ready to deal with any implications either from the financial or political perspective.	PUNOs
Programmatic risks					
Innovative approaches may be at risk due to low commitment by government.	High (9)	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Adequate information will be made available for informed decision making. Innovation has become a key word in public policies. Aligning innovative approaches to the EU accession or linked to other sources of funding would be the mitigation strategy. Partnerships with other institutions such as the ADISA Innovation Lab would also be sought.	PUNOs
Delays and/or non availability of required	Low (4)	Unlikely (2)	Minor (2)	INSTAT produces several statistical surveys i.e.	PUNOs

data necessary for microsimulations				SILC, LFS, HBS as well as others. In the likelihood of delays or issues with data the programme management team will work closely with INSTAT to find adequate data sources or construct synthetic panels	
Institutional risks					
Pressing emergency issues may hamper partner institutions' commitment.	High (12)	Possible (3)	Major (4)	After the earthquake of November 2019 and the COROVID-19, a certain degree of shifting priorities and emergencies are expected. However, close partnerships with government institutions as well as work of a diverse set of institutions would assist offset any of these risks	PUNOs
Low priority given to issues of social protection and lack of focus on vulnerable populations by central and local government.	High (9)	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	PUNOs have established partnership with the government and have ensured their commitment in this programme.	PUNOs

Fiduciary risks					