

**Leave No One Behind Programme (Phase 2)**  
**MPTF ANNUAL PROGRAMME<sup>1</sup> NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT**  
**REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2021**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Title: Leave No One Behind Programme (Phase 2)</li> <li>Programme Number <i>(if applicable)</i></li> <li>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>3</sup> 00128662</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results<sup>2</sup></b></p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i></p> <p>Country/Region: Albania</p> <hr/> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i></p>												
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme <i>UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National counterparts (government, private, NGOs &amp; others) and other International Organizations MHSP, MoF, MoE</li> </ul>												
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Total approved budget as per project document: CHF 8,000,000</td> <td style="width: 40%;">US\$8,260,494 (ex. rate @ 15/10/21)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MPTF /JP Contribution<sup>4</sup>:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,508,435</td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i></li> </ul>           Agency Contribution         </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i></li> </ul>           Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i> </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL:</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>1,508,435</b></td> </tr> </table>	Total approved budget as per project document: CHF 8,000,000	US\$8,260,494 (ex. rate @ 15/10/21)	MPTF /JP Contribution <sup>4</sup> :	1,508,435	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i></li> </ul> Agency Contribution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i></li> </ul> Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i>		Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i>		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1,508,435</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme Duration</b></p> <p>Overall Duration <i>(62 months)</i></p> <p>Start Date<sup>5</sup>                      19/10/2021</p> <p>Original End Date<sup>6</sup> 01/08/2021</p> <p>Current End date<sup>7</sup> 31/12/2026</p>
Total approved budget as per project document: CHF 8,000,000	US\$8,260,494 (ex. rate @ 15/10/21)												
MPTF /JP Contribution <sup>4</sup> :	1,508,435												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i></li> </ul> Agency Contribution													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>by Agency <i>(if applicable)</i></li> </ul> Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i>													
Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i>													
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1,508,435</b>												
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b></p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No    Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No    Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report Submitted By</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Name:</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Title:</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Participating Organization (Lead):</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Email address:</li> </ul>												

<sup>1</sup> The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

<sup>3</sup> The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>4</sup> The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>5</sup> The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>6</sup> As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

<sup>7</sup> If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

## Leave No One Behind Joint Programme (Phase 2)

### 1. Main interventions

The programme goal is that: “Vulnerable persons and groups have improved access to gender responsive public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and are empowered to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation”. The focus of the programme second phase is on the consolidation of the reform roll-out and strengthening of the results from the first phase.

There are 3 outcomes:

1. to empower the beneficiaries to access and to contribute to their social inclusion
2. to enable municipalities and service providers to provide services
3. to strengthen national institutions in the further development and implementation of social inclusion policies

### 2. Selection of target municipalities

While the programme will cover all of Albania, by empowering vulnerable people and by promoting systemic reform of social service and inclusion provision countrywide, the programme adopts geographic foci to ensure that around 30<sup>8</sup> (of a total of 61) municipalities are suitably capacitated to provide a system of integrated social services to cover the needs of the vulnerable population.

Local Governmental Units (LGUs) responsible for social service provision will be the key partners in implementing activities at local level and in coordinating activities with other local authorities. Active contributions of LGUs will consist of engaging in organizational development in view of efficient and effective service delivery, including accessing target groups, encouraging staff to participate in capacity building events, exchange with other LGUs, etc.

The LNB programme (Phase 2) is aware of the need to consolidate its existing partnerships with the 25 LGUs, and that certain smaller and/or rural LGUs are at risk of being left behind, as too complex to support or overseen within the wider process of reform. Equally, the programme will be implemented in the context of the sizeable EU external assistance investment in Albania in the field of social inclusion, under its IPA 2019 programme. The EU’s assistance for social inclusion measures at the local level, targets 19 municipalities in Albania for its support. While LNB (Phase 2) will continue to provide requested support to its existing close partner LGUs that have also now been prioritized by the EU, LNB (Phase 2) will not seek to extend its geographic focus to new partnerships with LGUs that are already prioritized now by the EU.

Therefore, while LNB (Phase 2) will be focused on LNB’s existing 25 LGU partners, a limited number of other LGUs will also be supported to become active players. The (existing and new) LGUs will be targeted for:

- delivering community-based social services,
- developing innovative delivery of social services, and
- mainstreaming social inclusion and gender equality in local policies.

---

<sup>8</sup> LNB2 ProDoc

Following up on the comprehensive Mapping of The Social Care Services in Albania conducted during May – September 2021, the programme set the following criteria to identify and suggest new target municipalities:

- lack/insufficient of social services and the need for (new) social services
- not in the target of EU/IPA programme for Social Inclusion.
- commitment/willingness to prioritize social services and allocate more resources for sustainable interventions

In addition, the identification of target municipalities was informed from the field trips and consultations with local actors conducted during the period September- November 2021 in 14 Municipalities.

The identification process and the selection of new target municipalities was consulted and agreed with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

In conclusion, the proposed *list with 32 LNB2 (existing and new) target municipalities* is attached as annex 1. Also attached *LNB municipality matrix* with data and information on social services at municipal level as annex 2.

### **3. Programme interventions under each of the 3 outcomes:**

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase the aim is to further improve the results orientation, as well as enhance the national system - building approach of the programme. With the programme document as guidance for the planning process, the UN participating agencies discussed the main interventions of the annual work-plan 2022 in a workshop. The activities were further elaborated and consulted with interested partners. In the following are the most important programme interventions under the 3 outcomes.

#### **Outcome 1 - Empowered vulnerable people**

Aware on the importance of the inclusion of the vulnerable population and of civil society organisations in project implementation, the target group and their needs and rights remain at the center of LNB2 programme implementation.

These are the main interventions:

- Build capacity for CSOs to advocate for access in social care services of VGs;
- Improve mechanisms for community dialogue by capitalizing the local community networks;
- Increase participation of vulnerable women and girls in the participatory budgeting practices;
- Improve access to integrated social services for R&E and for older persons;
- Increase uptake of new models of community-based social care services for VGs;
- Pilot innovative inclusive social services targeting vulnerable women and girls.

#### **Outcome 2 - Enabled municipalities and social service providers**

Local Governmental Units (LGUs) responsible for social service provision are the key partners in implementing activities at local level and in coordinating activities with other local authorities. For this, the main support provided by the programme include:

- Support LGUs to establish new models of social care services through social fund implementation;
- Strengthen the capacities of LGUs to update/ monitor implementation of social care plans using gender lens;
- Review the workflows of MIS and the roles of LGUs in implementing community care services.
- Strengthen the capacities of municipal service providers working with targeted population;
- Assist targeted municipalities to design and implement the social housing 5-year plans;
- Facilitate peer support and networking of professionals.

### Outcome 3 - **Strengthened national institutions**

The programme will continue to support key partners at central level (MHSP, MoF, MoE) in their development of policy, and of mechanisms for the integration of services, and their communication/consultation with stakeholders and target groups. The programme will cooperate more closely with INSTAT, the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education (ASCAP) and with universities providing professional and occupational training, and academic research, in relation to social care and social inclusion policy.

The main interventions under this outcome include:

- Support policy and regulatory framework development/update and their engendering: e.g. Social inclusion Policy Document 2022 – 2026,
- Work with MoHSP to operationalize, update and engender the Social Fund mechanism and expand its rollout;
- Technical assistance to MoFE to implement the new social housing legal framework;
- Support Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-university Education (ASCAP) capacities to develop quality and inclusive curricula and teacher training;
- Strengthen the partnership with Universities for development of the continuing education/qualification system, including the partnership with Lucerne University

## **4. Implementation Progress**

The impact of poverty and social exclusion can be minimized, if not neutralized, with the adequate and proper social protection and social inclusion policies. The government has undertaken three ambitious vertical reforms in disability, cash assistance and social care services, but there is need for measures, tools, and standards for national and subnational authorities to deliver integrated social protection that addresses the needs of men, women, boys and girls. In Albania, national policies on social protection are not driven by periodical nationally approved measurements of household or child poverty; evidence on material and non-material deprivation does not directly feed the design of any social protection measure; national social protection policies do not include national poverty reduction targets in line with the SDGs. A comprehensive social protection system is still being developed; while national policies do outline a vision for an integrated social protection system, it is still fragmented by the other sectors (health, education, nutrition etc.) and the vision is not backed up by adequately financed measures to enable implementation of the vision and address the gender-based and social determinants of poverty and social exclusion. The national information system for social protection still lags behind and is not a unified database collecting information on children who are beneficiaries of social protection programming. Spending is low on social protection – on cash benefits for families and children and particularly on social care services – and all national and local institutions dealing with social protection lack adequate resources. Pressure for fiscal discipline and reducing public debt has become an obstacle to identifying fiscal space for proper social protection budgets or financing a social protection floor.

Throughout the second half of 2021, since the start of the project, UN in Albania promoted and supported a social protection system that works for all, especially those most at risk and hard to reach through implementation of three joint programmes: Leave no One Behind (Phase I and II), financed by government of Switzerland; Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Deliver, and SDG Financing, financed by the UN Joint SDG Fund.

Through LNB2 joint programme, UN Agencies complemented the government's efforts to roll-out the social protection reform by adopting a holistic and reinforcing support approach with technical assistance, capacity building, advocacy, research, and grant funding.

*Empowerment of VGs at community level to demand responsive and inclusive social care services:* Vulnerable groups particularly R&E, PwDs, youth and women and their CSOs are empowered with



**Leave  
No One  
Behind**

United Nations House  
"Skenderbej" Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania  
Tel.: +355 (4) 2250 205, 2250 224, 2250 234

information, knowledge and advocacy skills on their rights and entitlements to social services and are actively engaged at local and national level in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms<sup>9</sup> to demand their rights and influence policy planning and decision making, which resulted in improved and inclusive local policies (i.e. inclusive local social care plans, establishment of new social care services) responsive to the needs of the vulnerable communities. Supported by UNDP, more than 1800 Roma and Egyptian (371 Families) benefited from the implementation of integrated social services in Lezha, Kruja and Fier; 4 community centres for children with disabilities (Korca, Shkodra, Roskovec and Puka) become operational and 13 community centers' staff strengthened their capacity building through online training, and exchange visits; 6 organizations of persons with disabilities implemented small grant projects and strengthened their capacities for advocacy and networking and voicing the rights of their constituencies involving +400 persons with disabilities.

With the support of UN Women, over 1200 women and men in 12 municipalities raised their voice and partook in participatory budgeting processes; 840 vulnerable women and girls, including youth, older women, rural women, women with disabilities and unemployed women have benefited from training and awareness events and voiced their needs. About 20% of concerns raised were discussed with Municipalities and will become priorities in the future budget. In addition, capacities of local CSOs and LGUs were strengthened to activate, engage the community and women of all groups into participatory budgeting processes: involved 35 LGUs representatives from 12 target municipalities in elaboration of local priorities for public consultation with women, 30 representatives of local NGOs / activists and Prisma members engaged in participatory budgeting process.

*Strengthened capacities of local governments in planning, budgeting and delivering adequate social care services including innovative services at local government level:* All municipalities developed and costed social care plans and 36 of them (60%) were supported by LNB. 25 municipalities (40%) implemented several innovative services for VGs with the potential of scaling up in other municipalities enabling access to quality social care services to over 17,000 R/E, PWDs, women, youth, and children (UNDP). 11 municipalities<sup>10</sup> were assisted to develop and approve social care plans fully costed and with clear targets to reach at least 60% of all children in poverty or vulnerable situation in the municipality, budget briefs that served to inform the decision making on the planning of expenditures for the financing of social care plan and social care services. All 61 municipalities have been supported through training and mentoring to populate and use the MIS for social care services (UNICEF). 5 municipalities<sup>11</sup> were assisted to develop through consultative process 5-year local social housing plans allowing them to assess and address the social housing needs of the most vulnerable in their territory. (UNDP). Tirana Municipality is assisted to develop the Plan of Actions on Persons with Disabilities and of R/E that will be an integral part of the new Local Social Care Plan 2021-2025, which is also under development. (UNDP). 17 municipalities were supported in implementing social fund through grant funds allocated for innovative community-based social care services. In addition, protocols were developed for municipal social care service staff in the situation of COVID-19 and similar pandemics. (UNDP) Working together with the welfare staff of municipalities of Tirana and Shkodra, clear and practical work protocols for NARUs and social workers have been developed, so that they can offer quality family assessment and counselling even in a crisis like COVID-19. The standards are being used to train the municipal staff of other municipalities. (UNDP/UNICEF)

*Further elaboration of policy and legal framework on Social Protection and Social Inclusion supported with establishment of public funding mechanisms at national level:* National institutions<sup>12</sup> advanced their cross-sectoral cooperation in consolidation and further development of the legal and regulatory policy framework on social inclusion and social care reforms in Albania, the design and use of the standardized data collection systems and data sharing protocols for monitoring and analysis of national social inclusion policies and strategies. Recognizing that the achievement of social inclusion and social protection requires concerted and well targeted financial investments in the social sector over the

<sup>9</sup> Forums of PWDs, Participatory Gender Budgeting Network, Local Partnership Models on SRH and Rights, Local Social Dialogue Groups, National Advocacy Platform-Youth Voice Network

<sup>10</sup> Tepelena, Pustec Himara, Devoll, Selenica, Klos, Kolonje, Vau i Dejes, Gramsh, Delvina, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Tirana, Vlora, Korca, Vau i Dejes and Permet

<sup>12</sup> MoHSP, MeFE, MoES, INSTAT

longer-term, the LNB programme has provided valuable technical support and advice to the government linked to its development of state funding mechanisms for social inclusion. This includes support to the MoHSP for the monitoring of Social Inclusion Indicators (SIPD) and writing of the evaluation report with conclusions and recommendations (UNDP); support to MoFE for: (1) the completion of the social housing secondary legislation; (2) the monitoring of the Social Housing Strategy (SHS) and development of the new action plan of SHS for the period 2021 – 2025; (3) development of the guidelines for the development of the local housing plans (UNDP); provision of technical assistance to the State Social Service for the mapping of social care services nationwide with the aim to support the latter and other concerned government institutions to identify the gaps in the area of social care services, as well as to inform LNB's internal planning of activities for further support to institutions providing social services for vulnerable groups at sub-national level. The mapping results are expected to serve as a good basis for government policy dialogue and for civil society engagement. (UNDP)

Other support, provided by UNDP, includes the strengthening of the partnership with academia and with QAAPE (Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-University Education) to (1) strengthen professional capacities of 1000 assistant teachers for children with disabilities and encourage their cooperation with the community-based centres and families and provision of integrated support services; (2) documentation and divulgation of good practices related to the cooperation of assistant teachers with families and social care service providers in supporting the development of children with disabilities.

Partnership with Faculty of Social Sciences, supported by UNICEF, contributed to strengthening the social protection workforce through pre-service and in-service curricula for social workers. The curricula of three social work programs in Tirana, Shkodra and Elbasan has been reviewed and revised to ensure that it reflects the social service legal framework, the new legal and professional requirement for the different types of social protection workforce working either at municipalities, or direct service provision. About 600 students graduating from social work bachelor degree will benefit from the new curricula during 2022-2024 and about 330 practising social workers have benefited from the training programmes.

With UN Women support, the results of social exclusion, vulnerabilities, and gender-based discrimination at the local level in 15 municipalities can finally be measured using the EU-SILC survey as a baseline. INSTAT finalized Gender Responsive Mapping of Linkages between Social inclusion and vulnerabilities. The report is a key resource for future policy makers in the field of social protection, highlighting the peculiarities of women's poverty in Albania in 15 municipalities and providing evidence that income-based poverty measures, complemented with material deprivation and social exclusion, increase gender inequality.

## 5. Implementation Challenges

The capacities and resources of the public administration responsible for social protection and social services remain limited at all levels, both in terms of the number of staff, technical capacity and financial allocations. This was particularly striking during Covid-19 lockdown, where the public administration at the central, but particularly the local, level showed weak disaster management capacities to identify vulnerable segments and respond to their needs quickly. An unclear division of roles was noted between national and local government that are a prerequisite for a well-coordinated and targeted response in emergency situations. The lack of clarity created difficulties in transferring the integration social service model to targeted municipalities, which faced increased demands from the R&E communities for a broad range of social services: health, education, social and economic. UN agencies maintained persistent communication and coordination with beneficiary municipalities to ensure that those most in need received adequate support.

The pandemic expanded the typology of vulnerable groups beyond the R&E communities, with the elderly, particularly those living alone, people with chronic disease, women victims of GBV, unemployed persons, people suffering from mental health and depression, and rural youth, and widened

the existing gaps and inequalities. The municipal social care services lacked any additional financing to cope with the pandemic and increase their outreach and had to re-orient their approach by coordinating with service providers from the civil society sector and international donors to respond to the demands of multiple vulnerable groups. The municipalities were mentored to adjust to the new reality and were supported with participatory tools for ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable were accounted for in the response measures.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented serious challenges for the budgetary allocations as LGUs had to respond to the financial and health crisis burden on social spending and social protection budgets, so that gender budgeting became even more challenging to address.

### **Annex 1: Target municipalities**

<b>Categories:</b>		<b>LNB2 target municipalities</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>UN agencies/inclusive services</b>
1	Berat	UNICEF
2	Bulqize	UNDP
3	Delvina	UNDP
4	Diber	UNDP
5	Divjaka	UNDP/UNW
6	Dropull	UNDP
7	Durres	UNDP/UNW/UNFPA/UNICEF
8	Elbasan	UNW
9	Fier	UNFPA
10	Fushe-Arrez	UNW
11	Kamez	UNDP
12	Konispol	UNDP
13	Korce	UNDP/UNICEF/UNW/UNFPA
14	Kruje	UNDP
15	Lezhe	UNW/UNFPA
16	Lushnje	UNDP/UNW
17	Maliq	UNDP
18	Mirdite	UNDP/UNW
19	Patos	UNDP/UNW

20	Peqin	UNW
21	Permet	UNDP
22	Pogradec	UNDP/UNW
23	Puke	UNDP
24	Roskovec	UNDP
25	Rrogozhine	UNFPA/UNDP
26	Sarande	UNDP
27	Shijak	UNDP
28	Shkoder	UNICEF/UNDP/UNW/UNFPA
29	Tirana	UNDP/UNFPA/UNW/UNICEF
30	Tropoje	UNDP/UNW
31	Ura Vajgurore	UNDP
32	Vlore	UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF