

2024

Albania Progress Report



UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA



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Photo: UNDP Albania

Foreword



Joint Executive Committee Meeting - United Nations and Government of Albania. Photo: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania

We are pleased to present the 2024 Albania Progress Report of the United Nations (UN) in Albania. The report highlights the collective achievements in advancing the country's journey toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its integration into the European Union. These efforts are guided by the Government of Albania–UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026.

The accomplishments showcased in this report reflect the critical role that partnerships play in ensuring the successful implementation of the Framework, with strong and ongoing collaboration among the UN, government, the private sector, civil society, academia and international partners. Their combined efforts have been essential to achieving these successes.

Significant achievements include two transformative joint programmes financed by the Sustainable Development Goal Fund: Digital Agriculture and Rural Transformation (DART) and Lifelong Empowerment and Protection in Albania. Meanwhile, the country's first National SDG Roadmap was successfully created, with other initiatives such as the Women Entrepreneurship Expo aiming to foster an inclusive business environment, with six companies joining the UN Global Compact and 38 pledging support for the Women's Empowerment Principles.

Our support for building the country's **human capital** focuses on effectively implementing reforms in social care, education and healthcare. Albania's participation in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transition underscores its commitment to advancing

labour policies, social welfare and inclusive measures for vulnerable groups. Adoption of the Social Protection Strategy (2024–2030) and the Social Inclusion Policy (2024–2028) lays the foundation for enhanced services and the inclusion of vulnerable groups of the population. Repair and reconstruction of 66 education facilities damaged by the 2019 earthquake benefited more than 24,000 students, and training was provided for more than 1,300 teachers in inclusive education and digital learning. Investments include the establishment of 47 IT labs, 107 science laboratories, 56 psychological–nursery rooms and 66 sports fields and gyms. Primary healthcare advancement, emergency preparedness and effective public +health management are central to Albania's health strategy. A transparency portal and a GIS platform aim to improve planning and address infrastructure needs, while vaccination, child nutrition monitoring and emergency preparedness have been improved.

Green growth and efforts to combat climate change have driven progress in climate-smart agriculture, vocational education and digital transformation. Employment and skills development initiatives reached thousands of individuals, while work on the green and blue economies saw gender integration in tourism, and the revitalization of Albania's cultural heritage, with 18 cultural sites benefiting from restoration and upgraded facilities. Implementation of the groundbreaking DART aims to leverage digitalization to advance sustainability goals with systemic interventions aimed particularly at smallholder farmers. The country also advanced in fulfilling its commitments under the Montreal Protocol by implementing systems to phase out ozone-depleting substances and adopting low-global-warming technologies.

Albania made progress in **governance and human rights**, underpinned by key policy changes and strategic interventions. The country is improving access to justice, particularly for marginalized populations. Ongoing investments in legal aid, judicial efficiency and a child-centred approach to justice are creating a more inclusive and responsive legal system. The implementation roadmap of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030, is supporting the alignment of national laws with international human rights standards. Additionally, the finalization of the Population and Housing Census 2023 is a significant achievement enabling detailed analysis of trends, disparities and needs across the population.

“

Albania made progress in governance and human rights, underpinned by key policy changes and strategic interventions.

Gender equality in Albania has been supported by a robust legal framework and improvements in key indices. The country has made notable progress in advancing gender equality and addressing violence against women and children. Support from the UN enhanced services for survivors of domestic violence, trafficking and other forms of abuse, providing both immediate assistance and long-term empowerment for women and children from vulnerable groups. Gender-responsive budgeting has become an integral part of Albania's financial planning. As a result, 59 per cent of budgetary programmes for 2025 now incorporate gender-specific objectives, driving more equitable resource distribution and policy implementation. Additionally, efforts to strengthen national gender equality mechanisms are bolstered by legal reforms.

We extend our deepest appreciation to all our partners for their invaluable contributions and look forward to continuing our collaboration in 2025, working together to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable Albania.

We invite you to read our report and explore the progress made in Albania in 2024!



Ms. Belinda Balluku
Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Infrastructure and Energy



Ms. Fiona McCluney
United Nations
Resident Coordinator

CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

1.1 Overall country and regional context in 2024

Albania, an upper-middle-income country with a population of 2.4 million (Census 2023), with 19 per cent under the age of 18 years, has demonstrated resilience and progress despite external shocks. The economy has grown steadily, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in current United States Dollars increasing from \$6,396 in 2021 to \$9,598 in 2024. Real GDP growth is forecast at 3.3 per cent for 2024, supported by robust sectors such as services (~50% of the economy), agriculture (~20%, with agro-processing employing 40%) and industry (20%), with tourism

the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion, with 70 per cent of children at risk. Despite demographic challenges, life expectancy has improved, reaching 78 years for men and 82 years for women in 2024. However, public expenditures on health and education remain limited (3% and 2.7% of GDP, respectively) and Albania’s purchasing power is one of the lowest in Europe (35% of the European Union (EU) average in 2023), reflecting the need for continued economic reforms and structural transformation. The country’s export sector contributes just over 20 per cent of GDP, while imports exceed 40 per cent, with the economy remaining vulnerable to global fluctuations in energy prices, grain imports and supply chain disruptions. The Albanian government has taken significant steps to address the above-mentioned issues, implementing frameworks such as the National

regional and global role has grown. While challenges remain (particularly in youth unemployment and labour informality, structural transformation of key economic sectors, vulnerability to external shocks, corruption, illicit financial flows, money laundering and limited investment in health, education and social services), the country’s resilience and commitment to reforms position it well for sustainable development and deeper integration into the EU and the global economy. Notably, Albania played an active role in 2024 in shaping the Western Balkans Growth Plan, fostering

changing dynamically (foreign visitors surged by 40% in 2023, growing in Q1 2024 by 121% year-on-year, placing Albania globally second only in growth). Micro-, small and medium enterprises dominate Albania’s private sector, accounting for 99.8 per cent of all active businesses and employing 81.6 per cent of the workforce, though structural weaknesses (e.g., low productivity and financing constraints) still hinder competitiveness. In 2023, 31.2% of active businesses were owned or managed by women, with the highest share of women owners or managers being in small businesses with 1–4 employees (24.5%). Unemployment rates remain high, particularly among youth and women. The informal sector accounts for some 30 per cent of GDP, with 20 per cent of the population below the national poverty line (30% if the upper poverty line is used). At-risk of poverty rate is particularly high for children 0-17 years old (26.5 percent, as opposed to 19.2 percent for the adult population 18 – 64), and higher among households with dependent children (23.9 percent) compared to those without (11.3 %). Children of age 0–17 years and women face

Strategy for Development and European Integration (NSDEI) 2022–2030, the Economic Reform Programme 2022–2024, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Acceleration Roadmap and, most recently, under the stimulus provided by the EU, the National Reform Agenda 2024. Public debt is already below the target of 60 per cent of GDP, supported by fiscal discipline and stabilizing inflation, which is expected to fall below 2.1 per cent in 2024. The country’s EU accession process is advancing, with the European Council acknowledging progress in the opening negotiations on Cluster 1: Fundamentals, in October 2024, and Cluster 6: External Relations, in December 2024. Both these reforms represent a significant step towards the goal of EU membership by 2030. Meanwhile, Albania’s global rankings reflect the progress made, including a jump from 54th in 2023 to 42nd in 2024 on the SDG Index, building on previous improvements. Additionally, the Corruption Perception Index ranking has improved, from 110th in 2021 to 98th in 2023. Albania’s

cooperation and economic integration within the region. In January 2024, the country started its two-year term as member of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council, demonstrating its commitment to global human rights advocacy and its enhanced role in international relations. Albania’s hosting of the Ukraine–Balkans Summit in February 2024, the Afghan Women’s Summit in September 2024 and a conference to mark 30 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also in September 2024, further highlight its strategic position in fostering cooperation and addressing security challenges, underscoring the country’s emerging influence as a key player in both the Balkans and broader international affairs.

1. Figures for recent years, depending on the source, are still mostly projections.
2. International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook database, October 2024.
3. Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), Albania in Figures 2022; INSTAT various databases 2024; UNICEF; other online sources.
4. The rapid fall in population size is on account of figures prior to 2024 being INSTAT estimates, while the 2024 figure is based on the 2023 national census.
5. <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/books/2020/gender-equality-index-for-the-republic-of-albania-2020/>
6. INSTAT, Albania in Figures 2022; INSTAT, various databases 2024; UNESCO; other online sources.

ALBANIA AT A GLANCE¹
AREA: 28,748 KM²

MACROECONOMICS ²	2022	2023	2024
NOMINAL GDP (\$BN)	19.083	22.822	26.130
REAL GDP GROWTH (%)	4.8	3.5	3.3
GDP PER CAPITA (CURRENT \$)	6,870	8,299	9,598
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)	10.9	10.7	10.7
INFLATION (%)	7.43	3.95	2.05
REVENUES (% GDP)	26.8	27.8	28.6
GENERAL GOVERNMENT GROSS DEBT (% GDP)	65.546	59.811	58.295

DEMOGRAPHY AND HEALTH ³	2023	2024
POPULATION (MILLION)	2.76	2.40⁴
AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO (% YOUNG)	25.57	25.4
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH (% GDP)	3.0	3.0
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, MALE	77.4	78.0
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, FEMALE	81.0	82.0
UNDER-5 MORTALITY RATE (DEATHS PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS)	9.4	9.0
GENDER EQUALITY INDEX 2020 ⁵	60.4 (2020)	

SELECTED GLOBAL RANKINGS	2023	2024
RULE OF LAW INDEX RANK	91	89
CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX RANK	98	
DEMOCRACY INDEX (TRANSITIONAL OR HYBRID REGIME)	46/100	
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX RANK		
SDG INDEX RANK	42	

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ⁶	2022	2023
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION (% GDP)	2.7	
TOTAL NET ENROLMENT RATE, UPPER SECONDARY, BOTH SEXES (%)	86.53	88.74
NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE	13,560	17,039
SHARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET), MALE (%)	22.6	23.5
SHARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NEET, FEMALE (%)	27.8	25.6
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (15–64 YEARS), MALE	80.0	82.0
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (15–64), FEMALE	66.7	69.6
AT-RISK OF POVERTY RATE IN ALBANIA (%)	20.6	21.7

1.2 Key partnerships and support to financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2024 the UN in Albania, through 19 agencies, implemented the third year of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026, delivering USD 68 million.

Through strategic collaborations with government institutions, international partners, the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia, the UN played a critical role in advancing Albania's sustainable development agenda. These partnerships have not only supported the country's EU accession priorities but also strengthened efforts in key areas such as human capital development, economic growth, climate resilience, governance and inclusion. The partnership of the EU, World Bank and

UN under the UN–EU Roadmap framework led to the development of a strategic paper on human capital, presented at EU House and at a meeting of the Donor Technical Secretariat, which promotes coordinated actions to align Albania's development objectives with EU accession and the SDGs.

Moreover, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) continued to foster robust and structured dialogues with key international partners, including the EU, the governments of Switzerland, Sweden, Italy and the United Kingdom (UK), and other key partners. These regular exchanges provided a crucial platform for aligning priorities, sharing updates and advancing common goals agenda. Focusing primarily on UN support for Albania's EU integration process,

this includes active engagement in Albania's EU screening process, supporting negotiation frameworks and assisting in the approximation of laws and policies with EU standards.

In addition to the EU integration, strategic partners discussions have centred around Albania's broader development priorities, including economic development, governance reforms and environmental sustainability. The UN has been able to play a key role in advocating for development assistance that aligns with both national needs and international standards, ensuring that cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality (GE) and climate change are integrated into all aspects of development programming.

The UN worked with the non-governmental organization (NGO) Human Development Promotion Centre and supported the government in drafting documents in preparation for Albania's first Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), including the Development Finance Assessment, the roadmap towards the INFF Financing Strategy and, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), SDG Finance support and an SDG Investor Map for Albania, all launched in 2024. These efforts are crucial for aligning national development finance with the SDGs. The UN also supported the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC) in the development of a Roadmap for achieving the SDGs in Albania.

UN Country Team Albania retreat – family photo with Government of Albania and European Delegation. Photo: UN Albania



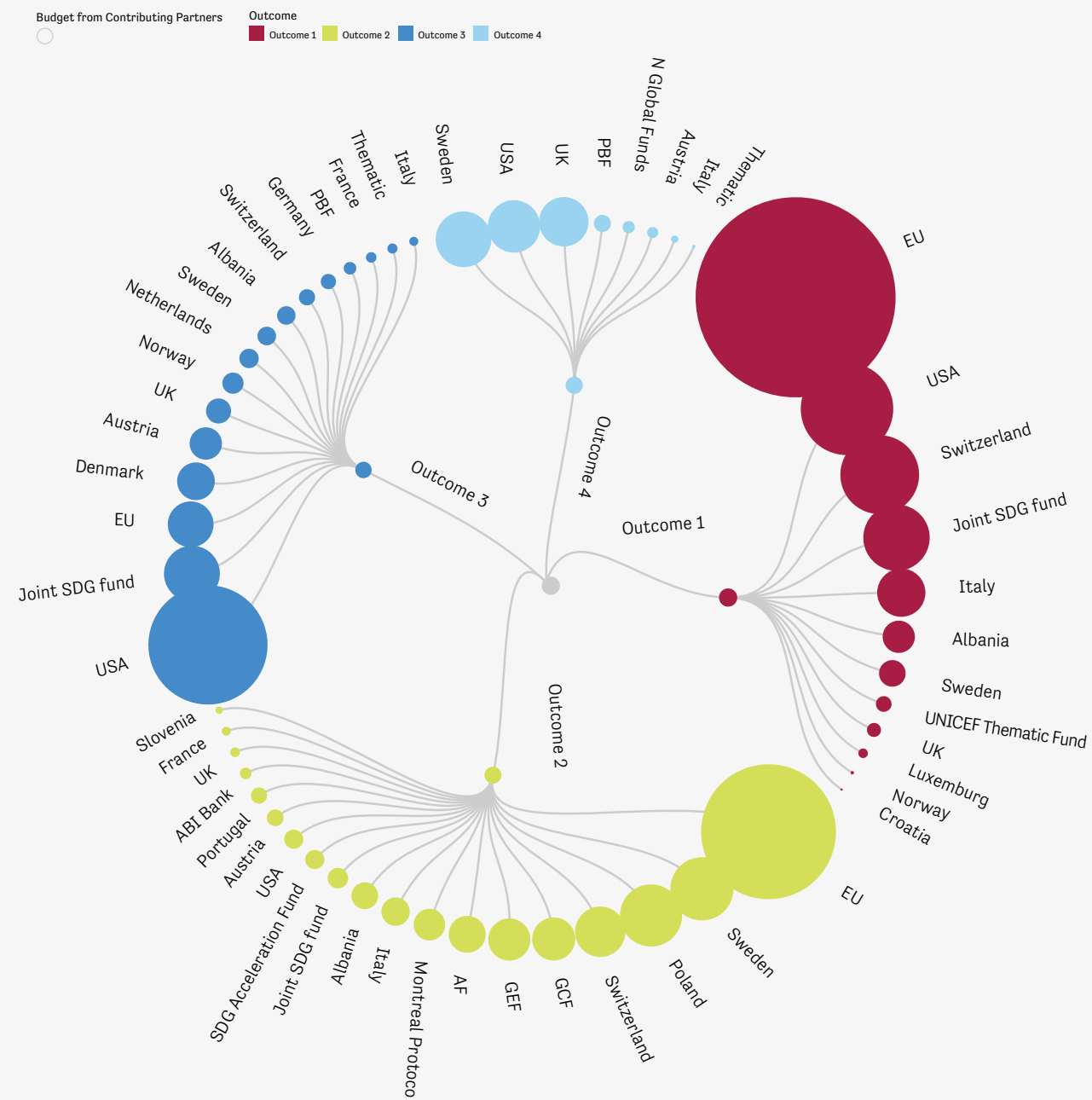
Resident UN Agencies



Non-Resident UN Agencies



2024 Contributing Partners



This collaborative approach has resulted in significant achievements, such as prioritizing youth engagement and employment through impactful initiatives implemented in 2024 that reached 1,500 youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) across three municipalities. The Upshift programme further empowered youth to implement innovative climate initiatives, while more than 260 young people contributed to U-Report polls that shaped discussions at the Summit of the Future. Additionally, awareness campaigns promoted biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods, encouraging youth-led action on both local and global challenges.

In 2024, collaboration with the private sector reached new heights, with four new companies joining the UN Global Compact, while the number of signatories of private entities adhering to the Women's Empowerment Principles reached 75 within the reporting year. The SDG Pioneers Awards engaged 67 businesses, recognizing 15 of them for outstanding contributions across five categories, while efforts to promote family-friendly and inclusive work environments led to four additional companies (increasing the total to 13) adopting progressive policies. Through the UN Free & Equal campaign, workshops and training sessions



Digital Agriculture and Rural Transformation (DART) programme is launched to achieve high impact on SDGs through digitalization in the agriculture sector.
Photo: FAO Albania

encouraged businesses to adopt anti-discrimination standards, fostering more inclusive workplaces.

Collaboration with academia also advanced, with the UN in partnership with Epoka University exploring SDG awareness within higher education institutions. Findings revealed that 85 per cent of respondents considered the SDGs critical for a sustainable future, underscoring the importance of integrating SDGs into university curricula and fostering community and business engagement. The UN's commitment to creating a collaborative ecosystem in Albania is evident in the transformative results achieved across economic, social and environmental dimensions, reinforcing the importance of partnerships in advancing Albania's development and the 2030 Agenda.

Lastly, in 2024, the Resident Coordinator's

Office (RCO) in Albania was supported by the United Nations Volunteers programme, which provided four skilled and dedicated online volunteers who played a key role in facilitating the work of the Resident Coordinator (RC) and offering valuable assistance across a range of tasks, including data analysis, mapping, programme design and other crucial functions.

Looking ahead to 2025, the UNCT in Albania plans to further strengthen its partnerships, scaling up collaboration with existing partners and seeking to expand engagement with new partners during the formulation of the new UN-Government of Albania Cooperation Framework for 2027-2031. This will involve close consultations with all partners, ensuring that the next phase of support reflects evolving priorities and challenges, while also building on the successes of the past few years.



Alignment with SDGs

1 2 3 4 5 10 11 16 17

Alignment with National
Development Goals

3

Alignment with EU Integration
Chapters & Priority Areas

19 23 24 26 28

OUTCOME 1

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT



Children playing at one of many education facilities reconstructed under EU4Schools Programme. Photo UNDP Albania

#EU4SCHOOLS PROGRAMME: BUILDING SCHOOLS, BUILDING DREAMS!

In Tirana amid a blend of old and new, stands “Emin Duraku” school—a solid symbol of education in a neighbourhood where tradition meets modernity. “Before the new school was built, we had to study in temporary classrooms”, says 14-year-old Bjorna shyly with a smile...

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Contributors

UNICEF

UNDP

UN WOMEN

UNFPA

UNHCR

WHO

UNESCO



The development of human capital is critical for successful implementation of Albania’s reform agenda under the Western Balkans Growth Plan. The country has made significant progress with regard to social protection, education and health, focusing on inclusion and equity for vulnerable groups. Targeted reforms have improved social care services, deinstitutionalization efforts and labour market participation, supported by strategies such as the National Strategy on Social Protection (NSSP) 2024–2030 and National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2030. Education reforms prioritize inclusion, infrastructure upgrades and digital modernization, though challenges persist in addressing disparities for marginalized groups, rural communities and public spending.

Similarly, Albania’s health sector has improved key indicators such as life expectancy but faces gaps in universal health coverage and disparities in access, particularly for vulnerable populations. Under the leadership of the RCO and coordinated by UNICEF, a policy dialogue process on Human Capital Development in Albania, linked to the reform agenda and EU accession, took place during 2024. All UN agencies were engaged in dialogue with the key strategic partners, including the EU Delegation, World Bank, Swiss Government, Sida, GIZ and the UK.

To sustain progress, Albania must strengthen investments and adopt coordinated policies across the above-mentioned sectors. For social protection, expanding fiscal space and capacity is essential to address poverty and service delivery gaps. Education requires increased funding and systemic reforms to improve outcomes and foster equity. For health, primary care reforms, workforce retention efforts and innovative health financing policies must be prioritized to address urban–rural disparities, the aging of the population and the burden of non-communicable diseases. Tackling these challenges holistically and investing in human capital will ensure sustainable improvements and inclusive development, driving Albania’s continued progress towards regional integration and economic growth.

OUTPUT 1.1 (ALIGNED WITH HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVE (HII) TO JOBS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION)

Social Protection systems and mechanisms are strengthened to increase coverage, quality and services

SDG TARGETS: 1.1, 1.3, 1.3.1, 1.4, 3.8, 5.1, 5.4, 5.4.1, 5.c.1, 5.5, 10.2, 10.3, 10.7, 11.10, 16.3, 16.6

Albania has made significant strides in social protection and inclusion through targeted reforms aimed at improving livelihoods, enhancing service delivery and fostering labour market participation for vulnerable groups. Social protection and employment-focused strategies, such as the NSSP 2024–2030, NESS 2030 and the Youth Guarantee, aim to address social exclusion and poverty, informal employment, skills mismatches and gender disparities. The country's participation in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transition underscores its commitment to advancing labour policies, social welfare and inclusive measures for vulnerable groups. Despite progress, challenges persist, including poverty, limited rural service access and gaps

in preventive measures and alternative care systems, requiring further investment in capacity, fiscal space, adequacy of services and inclusive policies.

In 2024, two major milestones were achieved: adoption of the NSSP (2024–2030) and the Social Inclusion Policy Document (2024–2028). These frameworks prioritize GE, child rights and shock responsiveness as integral components of Albania's social protection agenda. The UN supported Albania's negotiation position for Chapter 19 on Social Policies in the EU integration process. It also contributed to accountability mechanisms by supporting monitoring reports on the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and drafting a national report on implementation of the UN Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The UN also finalized the evaluation of the National Action Plan for Older Persons (2020–2024), commenced drafting its successor plan and capacitated 122 professionals in bio-psycho-social assessments for PwD. Amendments to Law No. 162/2020 on public procurement ensured gender-responsive governance by enabling CSOs to deliver specialized services, benefiting women survivors of violence and other vulnerable groups.

Implementation of these strategic frameworks contributed to expanding the coverage for marginalized groups, improving benefit adequacy and strengthening service delivery systems, enabling around 48,653 individuals.⁷ The expansion of social service provision across 51 municipalities represents steady progress, with 84 social care services now available nationwide. UN-supported funding enabled 22 municipalities to launch 27 new social services, benefiting 4,110 individuals. Technical assistance also equipped the State Social Services with tools to monitor service delivery, while UN grants helped 14 municipalities establish or expand social care services. A functional review of the State Social Services, supported by the UN, strengthened human and



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Singer Alban Skenderaj visits 'Shtëpia me Ngjyra' (House of Colors), a center serving children in need in Tirana. Photo: UNICEF Albania.



Photo: UNDP Albania/ EU4Schools



⁷ As reported by MoHSP, January 2025.



Photo: UNDP Albania


WWW.SOCIALE.AL

A platform for Social Protection and Services in Albania

technical resources, aligning with the new NSSP. The UN continued to support municipalities to strengthen their evidence-based support and interventions for older persons by engaging the local governments to carry out a Needs Assessment following the initial piloting in Sukth. Municipalities that have committed to engage in this process include Durres, Gjirokaster, Klos, Kolonja, Librazhd and Tirana. The UN's support for community-based models for health and social care has expanded significantly. In 13 districts, health education teams organized 49 awareness sessions, reaching 565 individuals, including 105 women who accessed sexual and reproductive health services. The model's expansion to Saranda and Delvina trained 43 health and social care providers and enhanced services for young key populations. In Tirana, Durres and other major cities, 753 individuals from key populations



In 2024, two major milestones were achieved: adoption of the NSSP (2024–2030) and the Social Inclusion Policy Document (2024-2028).

accessed specialized health services, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Sexually Transmitted Disease (HIV/STI) testing and counselling.

The UN's work in the deinstitutionalization reform, which is a priority of Chapter 23 in the EU plan of action, achieved significant milestones, transforming residential care institutions in Korca and Vlora into family-based and community services. A new Child and Family Support Service in Shkoder provided direct support to 183 children and families at risk of institutionalization, while capacity-building initiatives trained 160 professionals in family reunification and emergency response. These reforms enhanced service delivery and data collection, raising the ratio of trained childcare professionals to 80 per cent in select municipalities, a 30 per cent improvement over 2023. Capacity-building initiatives have professionalized Albania's social service workforce. With UN support, social work faculties in Elbasan, Shkoder and Tirana have updated training curricula, benefiting 255 in-service professionals. The introduction of a master's degree in social policies and sustainable development engaged more than 200 professionals through the online platform www.sociale.al.

Additionally, 90 professionals across 17 community centres for PwD were trained to deliver specialized services to 450 children and youth. Inclusion-focused reforms reached marginalized groups through participatory budgeting initiatives in five municipalities, where 772 individuals, including 384 women and girls, collaborated to address community issues. These initiatives led to 32 civic actions, with 73 per cent of concerns resolved by local governments. Meanwhile, 7,300 Afghan beneficiaries accessed cash

High Impact Initiatives

- 1 **Rooted in the SDGs;** not a new agenda
- 2 **An organizing frame to spotlight** investment pathways to accelerate SDG progress
- 3 **Each transition requires integrated policy spanning economic,** social and environmental dimensions
- 4 **Country context** determines the priority level and action accorded to each transition
- 5 **Metrics of success** for the transitions is in how they deliver for all persons in the society
- 6 **Just and equitable transitions,** with human rights, youth inclusion, gender equality and LNOB principles as fundamental design elements.



plus social protection measures, combining cash assistance with social services.

Gender-responsive governance frameworks were further strengthened by integrating gender-disaggregated data into municipal budget plans, addressing economic development and infrastructure priorities for marginalized groups.

OUTPUT 1.2 (ALIGNED WITH HII TO EDUCATION)

Education institutions have improved policy, digital knowledge, tools and budgets to offer inclusive learning and 21st century skills

SDG TARGETS: 4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.4.2, 4.6, 4.7, 16

Albania has demonstrated a strong commitment to transforming its education system by promoting inclusion, equity and quality through reforms, infrastructure upgrades and digital modernization. While enrolment and literacy rates have improved, significant challenges persist for vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian minorities and rural girls, who face barriers to access and retention. Public education spending remains below the EU average, exacerbating disparities in quality and outcomes and contributing to high rates of youth disengagement.

In 2024, the UN provided strategic support to strengthen Albania's education system through comprehensive interventions aimed at fostering equity and quality. A cornerstone achievement was the reform of Early Childhood Education (ECE), which expanded access for children of age 0–6 years, particularly benefiting marginalized groups, and established a robust foundation for lifelong learning.

**EU4SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

A transparency portal shows real-time information on the implementation of all targeted education facilities

The development of an EU-aligned roadmap for ECE was complemented by professional development initiatives that trained 418 assistive and classroom teachers in evidence-based inclusive practices. Additionally, 556 staff members received specialized training in blended learning methodologies and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) competencies, enhancing classroom engagement and reducing drop-out rates through programmes such as Social Emotional Learning and Early Warning Systems, and reaching 17,261 students.

Infrastructure and human capacity were significantly enhanced. Following the repair and reconstruction of 66 education facilities in earthquake-affected municipalities, improved learning environments were created for approximately 24,000 students. Investments also included the establishment of 47 IT labs, 107 science laboratories, 56 psychological–nursery rooms and 66 sports fields and gyms. A transparency portal (www.eu4schoolsportal.al) and a Geographical Information System (GIS) platform were launched to improve planning and address infrastructure needs, while six municipalities strengthened their capacities in ethical procurement and community consultation for infrastructure projects.

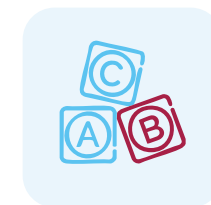
The advancement of inclusive education was further strengthened by transforming special schools into resource centres, increasing the number of assistant teachers and adopting inclusive curricula. These efforts were complemented by the expansion of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programmes, now offered in over 85 per cent of schools. During 2024, 220 teachers were certified in CSE delivery, with an additional 400 teachers and school directors set to complete training by early 2025. Digital competency in education was enhanced through the Media and Information Literacy curriculum, equipping 180 additional teachers in 2024, bringing to 420 the total number of educators trained to integrate digital literacy into classrooms. A systemic shift in Science, Technology, Engineering



Schoolchildren marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Photo: UNDP Albania

and Maths (STEM) education was catalysed by the establishment of a STEM Alliance, which promoted peer learning and GE in education. This initiative aimed to address gender gaps in STEM fields and foster innovation across Albania's education system. Non-formal education programmes were also prioritized, benefiting 741 Afghan refugee children and 213 pre-schoolers, alongside comprehensive training for 760 Afghan and Albanian parents to foster social cohesion and address child development needs. Albania's education system is progressively becoming more inclusive, equitable and modernized through strategic reforms and targeted interventions.

Continued investments in infrastructure, teacher training and digital education, coupled with cross-sectoral collaboration, will be pivotal in addressing remaining disparities and achieving transformative changes in education outcomes. These efforts ensure that Albania's education system is well-positioned to meet the needs of its diverse student population while aligning with EU standards and SDG targets.



A cornerstone achievement was the reform of Early Childhood Education (ECE), which expanded access for children of age 0–6 years, particularly benefiting marginalized groups, and established a robust foundation for lifelong learning.

OUTPUT 1.3 **OUTPUT 1.4**

Health Care and Shock Responsive Systems

SDG TARGETS: 2.1, 3.d.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 17.18



The Institute of Public Health (IPH), with the support of UNICEF launching the vaccination campaign against measles, mumps, and rubella. Photo: UNICEF Albania

Albania has achieved significant improvements in health indicators, including life expectancy (for which it surpasses regional averages), under-5 mortality and cardiovascular disease-related death rates in adults 30-70 years old. However, challenges persist in achieving universal health coverage (UHC), addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health, and ensuring equitable access to reproductive health services. Socio-economic disparities, out-of-pocket healthcare costs and gaps in preventive care exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly among marginalized groups such as Roma and Egyptians and low-income households. These disparities underscore the need for structural reforms to improve access, coverage and quality of healthcare services.

STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

In 2024, the UN supported the implementation of Albania's National Health Strategy and building and putting into practice a family-based, networked Primary Health Care model of care, driving key improvements across the healthcare system. Comprehensive assessments were conducted in 50 healthcare institutions and enhanced care standards were adopted in three regional neonatal intensive care units. Progress toward UHC was marked by expanding home-visit services to 35 per cent of health providers, benefiting underserved populations. The Universal Progressive Home Visiting (UPHV) model, implemented across seven regions (Berat, Elbasan, Korca, Kukes, Lezha, Tirana and Vlora), engaged 365

health personnel in capacity-building initiatives. These health professionals conducted 13,082 home visits, reaching 4,360 children under five years of age, including 773 Roma and Egyptian children. Accredited by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Health and Social Care Institutions, the UPHV programme focused on monitoring child growth, supporting parenting skills and addressing postpartum depression, child protection and stigma.

ADVANCING REPRODUCTIVE AND MATERNAL HEALTH

UN advocacy led to the finalization of Albania's Reproductive Health Law, embedding GE and rights-based approaches into healthcare policy. Quality improvement initiatives on maternal and newborn health included 14 supportive supervision visits to maternity hospitals nationwide, with training of 185 healthcare professionals in postpartum haemorrhage management, neonatal resuscitation and advanced newborn care.

Advocacy efforts focused on cervical cancer screening and improving SRHR services, while supportive supervision initiatives helped improve proficiency in managing pregnancies and childbirth. Implementation of the **National Child Health and Nutrition Framework**⁸ engaged 313 health professionals in a modernized monitoring system, enabling 8,910 home visits to improve child nutrition outcomes.

IMMUNIZATION AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

The National Immunization Programme was supported through capacity development activities reaching around 205 health professionals in 3 target regions with measles cases (Tirana, Durrës, Fier), on measles vaccine administration and interpersonal communication skills. 3,080 children, behind with the vaccination schedule including zero dose, received MMR vaccine.

Awareness raising activities took place during the [European Immunization Week](#) with over 8000 [parents](#) and community members including representatives of religious groups, reached with information

8. [UNICEF-NutritionStrategy-2020-2030-Brief.pdf](#)



205 health professionals were trained in measles vaccine administration and interpersonal communication to address vaccine hesitancy, leading to an increase in vaccination uptake and improved community resilience.

Photo: UNICEF Albania





about importance of childhood vaccination while addressing myths and concerns around measles. The Human Papillomavirus vaccination programme achieved 75.6 per cent coverage among girls born in 2009–2010, benefiting more than 15,000 individuals. Albania's Emergency Preparedness was strengthened through the development of the Mosaic Respiratory Surveillance Framework.

Albanian experts were trained on zoonotic disease risk assessment; Enhancing Public Health Emergency Operations Center functionality; Emergency Medical Teams; Hospital Safety Index (HSI), Infectious Substances Shipping. The Institute of Public Health was supported in defining laboratory workflows, equipment typology and specifications, and lab furniture planning.

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The UN JP on mental health engaged 424 healthcare specialists in professional development activities across four regions, focusing on early identification and referral of mental health conditions in children and adolescents. The roll-



Members of the Afghan Community attending health center in Shëngjin. Photo: UNICEF Albania

out of the 'I Fight Depression' platform, developed by the European Alliance against Depression, provided mental health support to 100 young people, complemented by school-based information sessions that reached 1,207 children and adolescents.

Community-led initiatives such as Upshift empowered 400 young people to design interventions addressing mental health challenges in their communities.

Youth engagement activities were organized around the World No Tobacco Day 2024, under the theme "Protecting children from tobacco industry interference", through volleyball games bringing together 100+ medical students and high school students from Tirana.

CRISIS RESPONSE AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

In Shëngjin, health services focused on mothers, children and adolescents reached 1,600 Afghan refugees, including antenatal care for 33 women and growth monitoring for 477 children. Community health initiatives engaged 407 individuals in discussions on nutrition, hygiene and first aid, enhancing health literacy and preventive practices. Through targeted interventions and collaborative efforts, Albania's healthcare system is becoming more resilient, inclusive and equipped to meet the needs of its population. Continued investments in health infrastructure, professional training and community-based services will be pivotal in achieving UHC and addressing persistent disparities, aligning Albania's health sector with SDG targets.



The Mosaic Respiratory Surveillance Framework enhanced Albania's emergency preparedness, training 45 health experts in advanced hospital safety protocols and zoonotic disease risk assessments.

OUTPUT 1.5

Inclusive community engagement

SDG TARGETS: 1.1, 1.5, 5.1, 5.5, 10.2

Albania continues to face significant challenges in fostering inclusive community engagement, particularly for marginalized groups such as Roma, Egyptians, women and youth in rural and disadvantaged areas. Structural barriers in local governance, socio-economic disparities and limited access to social services hinder effective participation in decision-making processes. Demographic shifts, including rural-to-urban migration and an aging population, exacerbate these challenges, while high levels of informality in employment and service delivery perpetuate gaps in access to social protection, education, healthcare and economic opportunities. The occurrence of natural disasters such as the 2019 earthquake highlights the urgent need for strengthened local capacities and participatory governance mechanisms to ensure resilience and inclusion.

To address the above-mentioned challenges, the UN supported Albania's efforts to promote inclusive community engagement through tailored interventions and capacity-building initiatives. In 2024, Albania's NSSP 2024–2030 and the Social Inclusion Policy Document (2024–2028) were operationalized with UN assistance, strengthening local governance and

community integration frameworks. A major milestone was the implementation of returnee-centred reintegration models in Berat, Devoll and Fier, tailored to local needs and integrated into municipal action plans to enhance sustainability. These initiatives improved access to essential services for returnees and strengthened local governance mechanisms for quality service delivery.

The UN facilitated the socio-economic integration of over 700 returnees by connecting them with skills development and entrepreneurship programmes under the Albanian National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES). These efforts supported their formal labour market integration, reduced vulnerabilities and fostered economic stability. Pilot programmes featuring women-led social business principles introduced sustainable local service delivery models, demonstrating the viability of community-

Photo: UNDP Albania



The UN facilitated the socio-economic integration of over **700 returnees** by connecting them with skills development and entrepreneurship programmes under the Albanian National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES).



Happy Children's Day! Photo: UNDP Albania

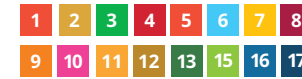
driven economic solutions. Community cohesion was strengthened through 19 small grants for local NGOs, which reached more than 1,000 returnees and promoted their active participation in social and economic life. These initiatives were part of the EU-financed project 'Strengthening National and Local Systems to Support the Effective Socio-Economic Integration of Returnees in the Western Balkans', which reinforced Albania's commitment to addressing migration challenges and stimulating

local development. The country's progress in fostering inclusive community engagement reflects a commitment to strengthening local governance, enhancing service accessibility and promoting social cohesion.

Continued investment in capacity building and integrated policy solutions will be essential for ensuring that all communities, particularly those comprising the most vulnerable, are actively included in Albania's development trajectory.



Alignment with SDGs



Alignment with National Development Goals



Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas



OUTCOME 2

GREEN GROWTH, INNOVATION, AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Vjosa is one of the last wild rivers in Europe. Photo: UN Albania

KRUJA'S NEWLY RENOVATED ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OPENS ITS DOORS TO THE PUBLIC

One of Albania's important cultural heritage sites, Kruja's Ethnographic Museum has reopened its doors following extensive restorations. The museum, damaged in the 2019 earthquake, has been transformed into a modern space...

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Contributors

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Albania is making progress in the areas of renewable energy, waste management, tourism and digitalization, though it faces challenges in agriculture, rural development and infrastructure. The agriculture sector, vital to the economy, is hindered by fragmentation, aging labour and limited access to technology, while the country works to diversify its energy sources and tackle climate change. Its digital transformation and climate action strategies focus on expanding access to technology and ensuring resilience in the face of natural disasters. Foreign visitors surged by 40 per cent in 2023 and, in Q1 2024, the number of travellers grew by 121 per cent year-on-year, placing the country second globally in growth. Micro-, small and medium enterprises dominate the private sector and account for 99.8 per cent of all active businesses, which between them employ 81.6 per cent of the workforce. Despite significant progress in urban development, further efforts are required to align with EU standards and ensure sustainable growth, with an emphasis on affordable housing, urban regeneration and environmental sustainability.

Albania's NESS 2030 aims to foster an inclusive labour market by addressing challenges such as youth unemployment, gender inequality and skills mismatches, with a focus on gender-responsive policies and initiatives such as the EU-supported Youth Guarantee. While progress is seen in reducing gender pay gaps and advancing digitalization, challenges remain in decent work opportunities, formal employment for refugees and flexible working arrangements. Women continue to face significant barriers, including high care burdens and limited access to non-traditional sectors, necessitating targeted actions to ensure their participation in green and digital economies.

The technical assistance provided in 2024 to the Ministry of State for Youth and Children (MoSYC) contributed directly to revision of the laws on voluntarism and youth, aiming to empower youth structures, increase funding for youth-led projects and ensure legal recognition of voluntary work for young people in the country. The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, along with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), were supported in jointly designing the new Strategy on Occupational Health and Security (OSH) in workplaces 2025–2030. Expected to be endorsed early in 2025, the OSH Strategy intends to bring working standards to a new level by mobilizing in its implementation public institutions, employers' and workers' organizations and relevant CSOs.

OUTPUT 2.1 (ALIGNED WITH HII TO JOBS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION)

Employment and Skills Development

SDG TARGETS: 1.3, 2.3, 2.a, 3.9, 3.c, 3.d, 4, 4.3, 4.5, 5.a, 5.1, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8

Albania's NESS 2030 emphasizes the creation of an inclusive labour market while addressing youth unemployment, skills mismatches and an aging workforce. As part of this vision, 2024 marked significant progress in implementing transformative programmes such as the **EU4Youth Programme** under the Youth Guarantee (YG) flagship initiative. These efforts aimed to reduce the number of NEET youth by creating accessible, youth-friendly education, training and employment services. Key interventions in 2024 included outreach strategy development, fostering of local partnerships, adopting of advanced YG implementation models and launching of a nationwide campaign to connect youth with tailored YG services. While advancements in digitalization and gender pay gap reduction are evident, challenges such as limited decent work opportunities, formal employment for refugees and flexible working arrangements persist. Women and girls continue to face barriers, including high care burdens and restricted access

to non-traditional sectors. The strategy prioritizes women's economic and social rights, emphasizing participation in green and digital economies.

EMPOWERING YOUTH AND BUILDING SKILLS

- More than **7,163 youths** (60% girls) participated in skills-building and innovation programmes. The **Upshift Programme** enabled 1,047 of them to design and implement innovative community solutions that address local challenges.
- Through coordinated UN support, **9,010 individuals** gained access to skills and lifelong learning programmes, including CSE, in an effort enhancing employability and labour market integration.

Photo: UNDP Albania



- Five new **Vocational Education and Training** providers were accredited, raising to 15 the total number of such providers. Skills development, entrepreneurship and employment readiness initiatives reached **40,000 adolescents**, contributing to better labour market outcomes.

ADVANCING REFUGEE INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

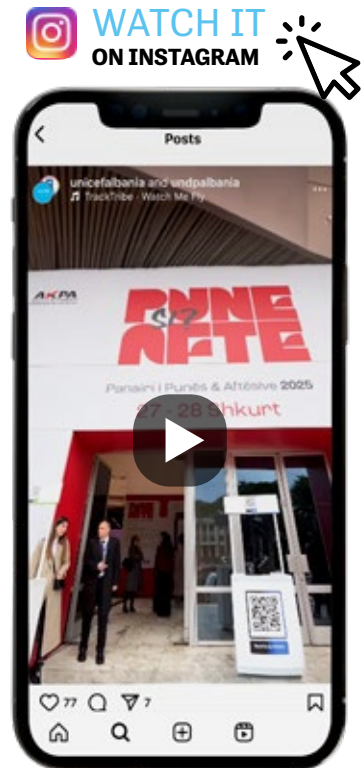
- The UN and partners significantly improved economic inclusion for refugees and forcibly displaced persons through targeted interventions. Tailored vocational training, job placement services and coaching programmes reached **39 refugees** and provided tailored counselling to **80 individuals**.
- Collaboration with the Albanian Microfinance Association provided **financial literacy training**, equipping participants with business budgeting skills and pathways to entrepreneurship. These interventions led to **15 per cent of the target group** reporting increased income and a **59.7 per cent reduction in unemployment** among refugees and asylum seekers.
- Advocacy materials, such as information leaflets on refugee rights, were distributed, improving awareness among public institutions and stakeholders.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

- Capacity-building initiatives in **Elbasan, Gramsh and Kolonja** supported women's labour market access. A **traditional product incubator** in Leskovik, operated by the entity *Duarartat e Leskovikut*, empowered local women by facilitating production and marketing of local goods.
- Establishment of the **Recognition of Prior Learning framework**⁹ and the **National Training Fund**¹⁰ enabled lifelong learning opportunities for diverse groups.

9. In Law no. 15/2017 'On Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania' (the VET Act) VNFIL is used interchangeably with the term 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL) and is defined as 'the process by which an individual's learning outcomes are formally recognised as skills and competences, either through the award of a qualification in the form of a certificate, diploma or title or through the award of equivalence, credits validation of acquired skills and/or competences'. [Albania country report Validation of non-formal and informal learning 2023.pdf](#), page 7.

10. [Skills for Jobs Supports the Albanian Government in the Dual VET Initiative](#)



STRENGTHENING WORKPLACE STANDARDS

- The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation and MoHSP, with UN support, developed the **OSH Strategy 2025–2030**, targeting enhanced workplace standards. Scheduled for endorsement in early 2025, this strategy aims to mobilize public institutions, employers, workers' organizations and CSOs to improve compliance with OSH standards.

By investing in targeted programmes and fostering inclusive policies, Albania is advancing towards a resilient, inclusive labour market. Continued collaboration, innovative programming and sustained investments will be critical to addressing remaining challenges and ensuring transformative outcomes for vulnerable populations.

OUTPUT 2.2 (ALIGNED WITH HII TO FOOD SYSTEMS AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY)

Sustainable and resilient economic growth and green and blue economy transition

SDG TARGETS: 1, 2, 3, 3.9, 4, 5, 5.1, 5.a, 6, 7, 8, 8.2, 8.3, 8.9, 8.10, 9, 9.1, 9.4, 10, 10.2, 10.4, 11.4, 11.6, 12, 12.b, 12.2, 12.5, 12.7, 13, 13.3, 13.b, 15, 16.6, 17, 17.7, 17.9, 17.17

Albania's transition to a green and blue economy is making strides toward sustainability. Progress is being made in renewable energy, waste management and digital transformation in the country. However, along with the challenges of growth rates and ensuring sustainability, enforcement gaps, underfunding and climate-related impacts remain. Agriculture is constrained by fragmented land ownership and, together with fisheries, impacted by aging labour and limited access to technology and markets. Meanwhile, rural depopulation and inadequate infrastructure are hindering progress. Nevertheless, Albania is aligning with European standards and orientating itself to the EU market. The UN's collaborative efforts focus on addressing systemic gaps in agriculture, fisheries and

cultural tourism while fostering resilient economic practices. By driving GE and promoting climate-smart solutions, these initiatives aim to transform Albania's socio-economic landscape, enhancing its alignment with the SDGs and accelerating sustainable economic transformation.

Albania has made substantial progress in promoting resilient economic practices through targeted private sector engagement and fostering gender equity. A total of 63 companies committed themselves to the Women Empowerment Principles, demonstrating a strong focus on workplace GE. Furthermore, 106 micro-, small and medium enterprises adopted innovative business models that integrate elements of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Of these, 66 businesses were supported, and 19 others enhanced their market access, through the 'Growing with Your Business' initiative. The emphasis on sustainability was further recognized through the SDG Business Pioneers Award, which acknowledged 15 businesses for their commitment to advancing sustainability and alignment with the SDGs.

UN-supported initiatives have significantly bolstered Albania's capacity to align with European standards and expand its export potential. Efforts that focus on enhancing compliance with quality and standards across value chains include those made in the medicinal and aromatic plants, and fruits and vegetables sectors. By strengthening national systems for standardization, accreditation, metrology and conformity assessment, Albania is better positioned to integrate into regional markets and meet European market requirements. Transformative achievements include advancing digital standardization practices in collaboration with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and European standards bodies such as the European Committee for Standardization and the European Electrotechnical Committee for



Though applying Global Quality and Standards (GQSP) in the medicinal and aromatic plants and fruit and vegetable sector, UNIDO supports Albania's efforts to strengthen compliance and market access. Photo UNIDO



Standardization. The National Accreditation Body has been reinforced to validate conformity assessments and technical capacities in agrifood laboratories have been upgraded through an action plan targeting key institutions such as the Food Safety and Veterinary Institute and the Agricultural Technology Transfer Centre. Additionally, the UN has finalized the structure of a new MSc in Quality and Standards in partnership with the Agriculture University in Tirana, alongside a digital platform serving farmers, exporters and industry stakeholders. GE remains central to these efforts. Gender consideration reports and policies have been developed to promote women's roles in quality infrastructure, with targeted support for women-led businesses. The translation of ISO 53800:2024 guidelines further underscores Albania's commitment to inclusive practices. Moreover, the UN launched the Innovative Solutions for Efficient and Sustainable TCLF Enterprises (ISES) programme, integrating methodologies from Sustaining

With the creative application of innovative technology and traditional building techniques, the Ethnographic Museum in Kruja is revitalized as part of a growing tourism offer. Photo: UNOPS Albania



Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) and Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP). 38 SMEs received SCORE training, improving workflow efficiency, energy consumption, waste reduction, and SOP utilization, while promoting fair distribution of productivity gains. 40% of trained SMEs successfully implemented improvement action plans, benefiting over 2,498 workers. Additionally, the UN, in collaboration with IndustriALL, mapped the TCLF sector and conducted an SME survey, accompanied by refresher training for local experts.

In the realm of agriculture and rural development, significant steps were taken to strengthen sustainable practices. FAO introduced climate-smart farming methods through 'SDG Demo Farms', leveraging a Training of Trainers (ToT) methodology under the 'Farmer Field School' approach. This initiative has fostered a broad adoption of best practices among small-scale farmers, leading to tangible improvements in agricultural productivity. The value of production per hectare increased to \$4,868 in 2024, up from \$3,889 in 2022. Furthermore, 11 businesses integrated environmental, social and governance principles into their operations, reinforcing the country's dedication to sustainable rural development.

Efforts to revitalize cultural tourism have delivered considerable results. By 2024, 18 cultural sites were revitalized in total, with nine

RC Fiona McCluney visits a Textile factory in Shkoder where new business practices are introduced through the SDG4Business Joint Programme. Photo: ILO Albania



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completed within the year, enhancing the tourism landscape and providing economic benefits to local communities. Development of cultural tourism was further bolstered by eight grant initiatives in 2024, bringing the total so far to 32 grants. These grants emphasize the integration of digital elements and cultural products, showcasing cultural heritage as a key driver of Albania's green economy transition.

In support of the Blue Economy, the UN has played a pivotal role in designing Albania's fisheries and aquaculture reforms, aligned with EU Green Deal principles. Key projects include reactivating the Vessel Monitoring System and preparing a national fisheries food safety policy. Efforts also focused on sustainable aquaculture, responsible fishing and waste reduction, ensuring alignment with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The UN's global action initiative One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) made progress in enhancing chestnut value chains in Tropoja. Activities included health and value chain assessments, establishing biological control programmes, constructing cold storage facilities and organizing capacity-building workshops alongside international study visits. These efforts are poised to expand further in 2025 with additional support from the UK and Albania's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD). Collaborative initiatives have established Local Action Groups in Korca, Shkoder and



The Golden Hands – a small business incubator in Leskovik where women process fruits and vegetables for distribution into the domestic market. Photo: UN Women Albania

Vlora, engaging over 80 stakeholders, including municipalities, universities and local businesses, to help drive sustainable regional development.

In the wood manufacturing sector, capacity-building efforts and export catalogues have enhanced market access for 25 companies. Meanwhile, the UN's International Conference on Competitiveness and Climate Change highlighted agrifood sector challenges, bringing together over 120 key stakeholders to discuss transformative solutions. Moreover, the UN continued to support the government and relevant institutions in

strengthening the trade policy framework for competition and consumer protection with the organization of two main trainings for 15 judges and magistrates, in cooperation with the School of Magistrates of Albania.

Through targeted initiatives and collaborative efforts, Albania is steadily advancing its transition to a sustainable, green and inclusive economy. By addressing systemic gaps, fostering innovation and driving partnerships, the country is well-positioned to meet its SDG commitments and ensure a resilient future for its citizens.

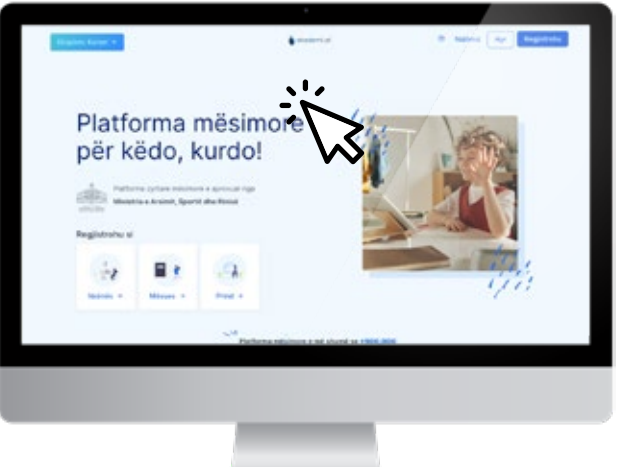
OUTPUT 2.3

Innovation

SDG TARGETS: 2.3, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 5.5, 8.3, 8.6, 9.c, 11.4, 12.b

Albania has achieved significant progress in its digital transformation journey, with 95 per cent of public services now online, ranking it 8th in Europe for digitalization (as of 2022). Widespread Internet access has surpassed EU averages, illustrating the country’s commitment to aligning its digital agenda with the SDGs. However, challenges remain: rural areas experience connectivity gaps, there is a shortage of digital skills, generally and especially among disadvantaged groups, while a persistent digital gender divide limits women’s participation in ICT. Addressing these disparities and fostering a people-centric approach to digital transformation is crucial for ensuring equitable access to the benefits of technology. To bridge these gaps, the UN supported transformative digital initiatives aimed at fostering innovation, building digital skills and enhancing digital infrastructure.

A landmark achievement was the launch of a national employment platform targeting youth. This platform, along with a professional network, connected nearly 400,000 individuals to employment opportunities, facilitated by hackathons and targeted skill-building programmes. Additionally, [akademi.al](#) expanded its reach to more than 534,800 students, offering 29,773 video lessons while laying the groundwork for AI-powered courses designed to revolutionize learning experiences.



In 2024, the UN assisted the Albania General Directorate of Customs, in collaboration with the National Agency for the Information Society to develop several projects aimed at digitalizing customs procedures in alignment with EU requirements and aimed at increasing transparency and effectiveness and reducing business costs and time.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Agency of Innovation and Excellence fostered youth-driven innovation through the initiative ‘Generation of Innovation’. This collaboration empowers young people to contribute ideas, ensuring youth-generated solutions are integrated into government planning processes. Another critical partnership with NAES led to the development of an AI-powered tool for the National Employment Office portal. This innovation significantly enhanced accessibility for unemployed youth and vulnerable groups, enabling them to navigate job opportunities more effectively and improve their chances of integration into the labour market. The Local Action Group of Elbasan achieved a major milestone with its official registration with MoARD as *Egnatia*. This initiative amplifies the voices of local women in community decision making, reinforcing the inclusive digital and innovation strategies.

Investments in digital infrastructure were equally transformative. GIS mapping for 100 schools was introduced, improving education finance and school optimization. Furthermore, the establishment of a Digital Innovation Profile provided a comprehensive evaluation of Albania’s digital and innovation ecosystem. The Profile report identified strategic priorities, including broadband mapping systems, spectrum monitoring, cybersecurity and fostering innovation hubs, creating a roadmap for targeted investments in digital transformation.

The UN also started implementation of the Digital Agriculture and Rural Transformation (DART) programme, financed by the Joint SDG Fund. The programme leverages digital tools to enhance sustainability goals with a specific focus on empowering smallholder farmers.



UPSHIFT goes to Durres. Photo: UNICEF Albania

An agricultural product incubator in Leskovik began operations, employing local women and promoting rural economic growth, further demonstrating the impact of the DART initiative. Efforts to integrate sustainable transport solutions also saw progress.

A comprehensive transport action plan aligned with the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport was developed, while Albania benefited from a UNECE-led workshop on electric mobility as a driver of green and digital transformations.

Meanwhile, policymakers from Albania and neighbouring countries gained access to tools, insights and practical skills to accelerate e-mobility adoption. Entrepreneurship and youth innovation received a significant boost through the Uplift programme. This initiative provided seed grants and coaching to 20 startups while empowering an additional 26 startups to advance their ideas and access markets. To support

long-term investments in the digital economy, the Digital Development Country Profile for Albania was completed, focusing on women’s economic empowerment and fostering equitable opportunities in the ICT sector.

Meanwhile, technical assistance to Albania’s Electronic and Postal Communications Authority focused on upgrading and expanding its spectrum monitoring system. This initiative enhanced the Authority’s efficiency in spectrum management, frequency planning and interference resolution, paving the way for a more robust and equitable digital landscape in the country.

The advancements made in Albania’s digital transformation underscore its commitment to innovation and inclusivity. Through targeted initiatives and collaborative efforts, the UN and its partners have helped foster a more connected and equitable society, paving the way for sustained growth and the realization of the country’s SDG aspirations.



Marking the Earth Day. Photo: UNDP Albania

OUTPUT 2.4 (ALIGNED WITH HII TO CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND POLLUTION, AND HII ENERGY ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY)

Climate and ecosystem resources

SDG TARGETS: 3.6, 3.9, 4, 4.1, 9.1, 9.4, 11.b, 12.c, 12.7, 13, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.b

Albania has demonstrated significant progress in addressing climate action, biodiversity conservation, energy transition and equitable resource access, all of which align with its broader sustainability goals. The country has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20.9 per cent by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050, as outlined in its National Adaptation Plan and renewable energy strategies. Conservation milestones include the establishment of the Vjosa River as a National Park and the expansion of marine protected areas, reinforcing Albania's dedication to preserving biodiversity and enhancing resilience.

While hydropower remains Albania's dominant energy source, efforts to diversify into wind and solar energy are under way to address both legacy coal mining impacts and future energy needs. Access to water and sanitation has also been prioritized, ensuring compliance with EU directives while addressing disparities in affordability and access, particularly for vulnerable populations. These multi-faceted efforts, supported by international collaboration and funding,

exemplify Albania's commitment to an inclusive and green transition.

In 2024, Albania advanced its National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy through extensive UN-supported interventions. The National Adaptation Plan framework was significantly expanded to include eight municipal adaptation action plans and a dedicated gender action plan, ensuring climate adaptation efforts were inclusive and gender responsive. A stakeholder engagement and communication plan was developed to facilitate participatory processes, while strategic risk assessments across sectors such as energy, transport, tourism, urban development and agriculture provided a strong evidence base for targeted climate action. Albania has made transformative advancements in environmental sustainability and resource efficiency. Efforts to phase out ozone-depleting substances have not only aligned with the Montreal Protocol commitments but also introduced gender-inclusive practices, encouraging women's participation in technical roles and fostering modernization in the refrigeration sector. The UN is

implementing a Global Environment Facility-backed project to promote e-mobility solutions in cities known for their eco-tourism potential. This initiative aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in road transport by integrating smart charging systems and electric vehicles, aligning with sustainable tourism and decarbonization goals.

Under the National Protected Areas Strategy, substantial achievements in biodiversity conservation have been recorded. More than 103,922 hectares of terrestrial and marine areas were placed under enhanced protection, with 67,209 hectares designated as marine protected zones through UN programmes. Additionally, the National Water Resources Management Framework strengthened transboundary cooperation through the Dinaric Karst Aquifer system project, improving governance across the Drin, Mat and Vjosa rivers. Joint programmes advanced resource-efficient and cleaner production (RECP) practices in Albania's textile and footwear industries. Through the development of six business cases based on RECP assessments, the project laid the foundations for adoption of sustainable practices in this key sector. Additionally, 12 national experts (University of Tirana lecturers) have been trained by the UN in the RECP methodology, ensuring a skilled workforce to support the efforts. The impact extends to the academic sphere, with the integration of RECP methodology into the masters programmes at Tirana University, fostering long-term capacity-building and knowledge dissemination. To support energy system transformations, Albania participated in the UN study *Digitalization in Support of Energy Systems Transformation*, which explored the potential of transitioning from centralized analogue infrastructures to distributed digital economies. The study highlighted opportunities to integrate modern technologies such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity into local energy generation and distribution, improving resilience, accessibility and fairness in energy services. Workshops on Albania's readiness for a green and just transition in post-coal-mining areas explored sectoral decarbonization and frameworks for equitable transitions. These discussions culminated in actionable recommendations, supported by UNECE, to ensure sustainable resource use and innovative solutions for communities transitioning away from coal reliance. Equitable access to water and sanitation was another priority addressed through a self-assessment exercise using the Equitable Access

UN Agencies

UNDP

UNICEF

UNIDO

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UNECE

ILO



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Scorecard. Stakeholders identified critical challenges, including affordability for the poorest populations, effective implementation of national strategies at the local level and gaps in institutional coordination. These insights informed action plans aimed at improving equitable access, supported by UNECE. Despite a robust governance framework, the findings emphasized the need for sustained investments to address systemic gaps and ensure all populations benefit equitably from water and sanitation services.

Community engagement efforts under the Climate Awareness Framework reached 35,000 people through targeted campaigns focusing on health, safety and climate impacts. The Sustainable Tourism Initiative in Valbona Valley engaged more than 500 participants in conservation-focused activities while promoting economic opportunities for local communities. Youth involvement was a cornerstone of Albania's climate strategy, as seen in the Youth4AirQuality project. In Tirana, youth advocates formally submitted demands for air quality improvements, further supported by their participation in COP29, where they presented key advocacy messages on child-friendly NDCs to global leaders. These efforts exemplify the growing role of youths as critical stakeholders in advancing climate action. Albania's progress in climate action and ecosystem resource management reflects a clear commitment to sustainability and resilience. Through participatory planning, international collaboration and targeted interventions, the country is steadily building the foundations for a greener and more inclusive future, ensuring that no one is left behind in its pursuit of SDGs.

OUTPUT 2.5

Disaster Risk Reduction

SDG TARGETS: 1.5, 2.1, 6.5, 11.b, 11, 11.4, 13.1, 13.3

Albania has embraced a proactive approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR), aligning its strategies with the Sendai Framework and prioritizing resilience and preparedness. In a landmark move, the country approved its first National DRR Strategy and Action Plan, which sets a comprehensive framework for disaster preparedness and response. Efforts to align with EU directives and regional initiatives are ongoing, reflecting Albania's commitment to fostering regional cooperation in disaster management. Ten DRMs, protocols of disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery, and prevention have been established for the Albanian cultural heritage

provided the Agency of Water Resource Management with a strong foundation for informed decision making and strategic planning. Building on the Flood Risk Management Plan for the lower Drin and Buna river basin, UNDP is designing enhanced drainage capacity for the Murtemza channel to mitigate flood risks in the valley. This strategic measure contributes to effective flood management and community protection. A ToT programme equipped national stakeholders with skills in Integrated Flood Risk Management, the EU Floods Directive, Hydraulic and Hydrologic Modelling, GIS and Early Warning Systems. Albania also contributed to a River Drin basin-wide Flood Risk Management Strategy, promoting regional cooperation on climate resilience. Additional studies focused on hydropower upgrades, resilient agriculture and sustainable land use to address climate risks. The Gender Action Plan implemented in the Drin river basin achieved a 35 per cent female contribution rate across activities, reinforcing the UN's commitment to gender-responsive development. A financing agreement between the UN and the National Agency for Civil Protection demonstrates the government's commitment to enhancing national disaster risk management and civil defence capacities with a UN entity as partner of choice in the area. Achievements include training nine staff in data collection, completing the Sendai Monitor 2023 report and delivering six civil protection training modules for 232 participants across Albania. Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government Plans were developed for 14 ministries, with 51 staff trained. Meanwhile, for disaster risk management, simulations carried out in 12 schools trained 420 students, 48 teachers and 42 municipal personnel to improve community preparedness.

The Business Continuity Plan for Saranda port was finalized, involving 33 stakeholders and entities at local and regional levels. The winter preparedness exercise enhanced collaboration among 128 responders for severe storm scenarios, while four command post exercises tested the National Civil Emergency Plan, training 241 staff. Local DRR strategies for six municipalities in Fier were finalized, while civil emergency plans for Fier County and six municipalities are also under way. The UN continues its strategic partnership with disaster risk management institutions to enhance national capacities through staff training, civil emergency preparedness and stakeholder awareness. Lessons from the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) are further informing the development of a

comprehensive disaster recovery framework. These measures significantly improved Albania's ability to prepare for and respond to disasters effectively, enhancing overall resilience at both the local and the national level. Despite these advances, challenges persist, particularly in localized resilience planning and addressing the disproportionate impacts of disasters on women and girls. The increasing frequency of climate-related events, including floods, fires and storms, exacerbates vulnerabilities in the most affected municipalities. Gender-specific barriers continue to limit women's participation in shaping disaster policies, while assessments underscore their heightened economic, health and social vulnerabilities during disasters.

To mitigate these challenges, gender-sensitive DRR policies are being developed to better support women and girls at both local and national levels.



In a landmark move, the country approved its first National DRR Strategy and Action Plan, which sets a comprehensive framework for disaster preparedness and response.



National workshop on Post-Disaster Needs Assessment and Recovery Planning in Albania. Photo: UNDP Albania

framework. Capacity building workshop for disaster risk organized for 50+ site managers, caretakers and other stakeholders. Flood risk maps supported by the UN were developed for seven high-risk areas along the River Drin featuring GIS data, area-specific 'passports' and ArcGIS templates. These tools

Vromoneri's natural hot springs, also known as Sarandopori, chosen as a pilot area for the #EU4Nature project due to their ecological value. Photo: UNDP Albania





Restoring and safeguarding Albanian cultural heritage for future generations together. Photo: UNOPS Albania

OUTPUT 2.6

Sustainable cities

SDG TARGETS: 11.1, 11.7, 16.6, 16.7

More people in Albania now live in urban areas than ever before (65%, 2023 census, compared to 53% in 2011), the rapid pace of urbanization, particularly in Durrës and Tirana, combined with growing tourism and infrastructure development, poses significant challenges with traffic congestion, poor air quality, municipal waste management, affordable housing and urban planning. To address these issues that impact quality of life, Albania is implementing comprehensive reforms aimed at aligning with EU standards with an emphasis on affordable housing, urban regeneration, land administration transparency and environmental sustainability to drive equitable and sustainable urban growth.

In 2024, the partnership between Albania and the UN continued to deliver impactful results through the Child-Friendly Municipality (CFM) initiative. Diber Municipal Council approved its Child-Friendly Municipality Action Plan for 2024–2026, while the CFM Cross-Sectoral Steering Committee maintained oversight of the Korça Municipality Child-Friendly Action Plan for 2023–2025. These action plans have created robust frameworks for advancing child rights and integrating child-friendly policies into local governance structures.

Comprehensive statistical snapshots of the situation for children and adolescents in Diber and Korça municipalities were developed, drawing on cross-sectoral data provided by the local authorities. These analyses have been instrumental in shaping local initiatives and planning processes.

Informed by the concluding observations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, more than 150



Comprehensive statistical snapshots of the situation for children and adolescents in Diber and Korça municipalities were developed, drawing on cross-sectoral data provided by the local authorities.

secondary- and high-school students participated in workshops to discuss priority actions for the municipalities.

Key issues raised include discrimination, school bullying, mental health challenges, the need for psychological support, child labour, early marriage, and migration risks. Building on these dialogues, forums were established that brought together parents, children, adolescents, professionals and decision makers from the sectors of education, health, law enforcement, and social protection. The forums created a platform for advocacy, ensuring alignment between national and local agendas on child rights. Youth participation in urban governance was further enhanced through the participation of 120 students in collaborative workshops, which addressed the pressing concerns of violence, bullying and mental health, fostering direct engagement with local authorities. Five additional workshops brought together 60 representatives from various sectors to strengthen child-centred governance and promote a people-focused approach to urban development.

Efforts to advance urban regeneration included initiatives targeting waste management and affordable housing strategies aimed at reducing disparities and improving living conditions in urban areas. An interdisciplinary dialogue on Albania's country profiles on housing and land management

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provided key recommendations for sustainable urban planning, emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision making, capacity building for local authorities and enhanced coordination to meet EU integration requirements.

Capacity-building sessions for municipalities focused on sustainable urban planning, addressing challenges related to rapid urbanization and aligning Albania's urban governance with environmental and inclusivity goals. By embedding sustainability principles into policy frameworks and strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination, these efforts have bolstered the transition to sustainable cities in the country.

Albania's progress in urban development reflects a growing commitment to sustainable and inclusive cities. Through strategic partnerships, child-centred governance, and capacity-building initiatives, the country is laying the groundwork for resilient urban growth that aligns with EU standards and SDG targets. Continued investments and collaborative efforts will be essential to overcoming persistent challenges and ensuring that urban development initiatives leave no one behind.

Through the Child-Friendly City Initiative, governance improved to build better cities and communities for children. Photo: UNICEF Albania





Alignment with SDGs

1 3 4 5 8 10 11 12 16 17

Alignment with National
Development Goals

1

Alignment with EU Integration
Chapters & Priority Areas

5 10 22 23 24 32

OUTCOME 3

GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS



At the 'Road to Resilience' conference, regional leaders work to boost youth participation in disaster risk reduction planning. Photo: UNICEF Albania

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING: A NEW GENERATION OF PEACEBUILDERS

A new generation of peacebuilders is emerging in the Western Balkans, driven by the values of inclusion, equality and trust. These young leaders are poised to influence their communities and the broader region in meaningful ways...

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Albania has made notable progress in digitalizing public services – it now ranks 8th in Europe and 19th globally, with 95 per cent of services now available online – improving service quality and reducing corruption. However, significant governance challenges persist, including those of corruption, money laundering and illicit activities. According to the annual Trust in Governance survey, only 38 percent of respondents rated central government institutional transparency and accountability as satisfactory and 36 per cent, local governance. Even fewer believed there were sufficient opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of public institutions (27% for central government; 37% for local government). Continued efforts are required to combat human trafficking and cybercrime and enhance the justice system to improve legal literacy, public trust, and marginalized group support. Although the country has made strides in aligning national strategies with the SDGs, challenges remain in data availability, gender-inclusive strategies, and climate change adaptation at the subnational level.

In terms of human rights, Albania has made progress in aligning legal frameworks with international standards, yet challenges in implementation persist, particularly in strengthening National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and addressing gender-based violence (GBV).

The National Strategy on Migration 2024–2030 and Action Plan 2024–2026 have been drafted, and implementation started. The new Strategy draws on many provisions contained in the existing national strategic plans (11 such documents). Despite legislative improvements, issues remain in migration management, the protection of migrants' rights, and refugee integration, with a shift towards regular migration for employment. Efforts to enhance public procurement and justice system reforms, supported by EU funding, aim to address these challenges. Strengthening local governance, enhancing women's participation and fostering regional cooperation are essential for advancing sustainable development and resilience across the country.

OUTPUT 3.1

Access to Justice

SDG TARGETS: 5.2, 5.5, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 16.3, 16.4, 16.6, 16.9, 16.a

Since 2016 Albania has made significant strides in justice reform, aiming to establish an independent and efficient system. However, challenges persist, particularly for marginalized women and children. Women, including those from rural areas and the elderly, women with disabilities, and those from the Roma and Egyptian communities, face barriers including discrimination, stereotyping and lack of awareness in the justice system, limiting their access to legal protection. Despite improvements in free legal aid and the introduction of a new judicial map, the system still struggles with court backlogs, delayed proceedings and inadequate resources for vulnerable groups. Addressing these issues requires stronger legal frameworks, enhanced child protection strategies and expanded legal aid services to ensure equitable access to justice.

STRENGTHENING LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND STATELESSNESS PREVENTION

- **310 individuals at risk of statelessness** received legal assistance from the UN and Tirana Legal Aid Society to register in the civil registry and confirm nationality.
- **150 officials** were trained in the revised law on civil status, supported by newly published guidelines on implementing civil status legislation.
- **The 2023 census identified 205 stateless individuals**, thanks to UN-supported efforts in collaboration with INSTAT and the Ministry of Interior.

- **A national conference on statelessness** assessed Albania's progress, concluding the IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness and launching the Global Alliance to End Statelessness (2024–2030).

EXPANDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

- **300+ professionals (134 women)** received training in child-friendly, victim-centred and trauma-informed legal practices, enhancing forensic interview procedures and collaborative case handling.
- **2,472 vulnerable individuals (1,290 women)** accessed free legal aid services through UN-supported centres.
- **1,093 individuals (814 women)** utilized digital legal aid platforms operated by CSOs.
- **45 children (10 girls) in conflict or contact with the law** received specialized legal, psychological, mediation, and socio-economic reintegration support.
- **182 parents (158 women)** were provided with legal guidance on family relations, DV, GE and child protection laws.

CHILD-CENTRED JUSTICE INITIATIVES

- **282 students (135 girls, 21 Roma)** were trained in conflict resolution workshops, reducing risks of juvenile offending and victimization.
- **151 children (73 girls, 16 Egyptian)** engaged in peer-to-peer education through artistic and recreational activities.
- **The first Cross-Sectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime** was supported through the dissemination of a child-friendly brochure detailing the strategy's impact on victims' rights.
- **The Ministry of Justice and Lezha Municipality**, in collaboration with UN,

 **READ MORE ON INSTAGRAM**



UNICEF's UPSHIFT team celebrate the many workshops held in 2024 to break down barriers and provide opportunities for young innovators to build a future. Photo: UNICEF Albania



organized **Victims Awareness Week**, engaging 150+ community members in public-awareness activities.

DIGITAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- **938 individuals** from Fier, Gjirokastrë, Shkoder and Tirana increased their awareness of legal rights through digital justice platforms.
- **The Upshift programme** engaged **32 incarcerated boys**, empowering them to develop entrepreneurial solutions. One project received UNICEF funding and three others gained external stakeholder support for implementation.

Through targeted reforms and strategic interventions, Albania is advancing justice accessibility, particularly for marginalized populations. Sustained investments in legal aid, judicial efficiency, and child-centred justice will be key to fostering a more inclusive and responsive legal system.

OUTPUT 3.2

Good governance, participation and voice

SDG TARGETS: 1.3, 4.4.2, 5.5, 10.2, 10.3, 16, 16.7

In 2024, Albania advanced its governance reforms, particularly in strengthening anti-corruption measures and improving financial oversight, leading to its removal from the Financial Action Task Force (global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog) grey list. However, challenges persist in areas such as human trafficking, cybercrime, and money laundering. While justice system reforms have expanded access to legal services, more efforts are needed to enhance legal literacy, rebuild public trust and ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups. Strengthening governance structures and promoting citizen participation remain essential to achieving Albania's broader SDG and institutional objectives.

To promote good governance and civic engagement, the UN supported several transformative initiatives aimed at fostering transparency, inclusivity, and participatory decision making.

Efforts to improve civil society engagement led to increased transparency and efficiency in public funding for CSOs across 18 municipalities. Public



Efforts to improve civil society engagement led to increased transparency and efficiency in public funding for CSOs across 18 municipalities.



Young people learn about the Youth Guarantee, a European initiative to help youth into the job market. Photo: UNDP Albania

funding mechanisms were streamlined to ensure accountability and wider access for CSOs, benefiting more than 33,500 individuals through civil society-led initiatives. Additionally, mentoring sessions were conducted to assist local governments in launching public calls for funding CSOs, fostering collaboration and improved governance at the local level.

Youth empowerment was a priority, with over 1,000 youth activists leading 24 local dialogue sessions and implementing 30 community initiatives focused on civic responsibility and engagement. The creation of four forums brought together 14 municipalities and CSOs to strengthen partnerships and enhance social service delivery, ensuring a more responsive and inclusive governance system. Efforts to combat hate speech and promote inclusion reached a broad audience

through the 'Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality and Trust' project. Through this initiative, 600 students and 130 young journalists received training in media literacy, while large-scale awareness campaigns engaged 780,000 individuals. The initiative also incorporated sports-based activities to promote inclusion, with the participation of youth with intellectual disabilities in Special Olympics programmes, demonstrating the power of sports in fostering equity and social cohesion.

Albania's governance and civic participation landscape has evolved through key reforms and inclusive engagement initiatives. Strengthening transparency mechanisms, supporting civil society and fostering youth leadership will be instrumental in building a more accountable and participatory governance framework.

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Fatma, a participant in UN Peacebuilding fund programme for 'Youth for Inclusion, Equality, and Trust', shares testimony on bullying. Photo: UNFPA Albania/Faktoje.al

YOUTH 4 INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND TRUST

#NO HATE SPEECH



Click to view



UNFPA and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection host EURAG annual dialogue. EURAG is largest umbrella organization for older people representing 27 countries in Europe region. Photo: UNFPA Albania

OUTPUT 3.3

Data and evidence

SDG TARGETS: 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.a, 5.c, 8.3, 8.5, 11.4, 12.b, 16, 16.7, 17.18, 17.19, 17.8

Albania has made significant progress in assessing data availability for SDG indicators, achieving a strong index score of 75.03, ranking the country 42nd out of 166. However, persistent challenges remain, including gaps in rural–urban disaggregation, gender statistics and a limited culture of evidence-based policymaking. Strengthening Albania’s statistical systems and expanding data availability are crucial to ensuring effective governance and informed decision making.

The UN has played a central role in enhancing Albania’s data ecosystem, facilitating capacity-building initiatives and strategic partnerships. In 2024, **121 data producers and users** (110 women, 11 men) received training to strengthen gender data collection, analysis and dissemination. Institutional collaboration was reinforced through a dedicated MoU with INSTAT, alongside the establishment of an **Inter-Institutional Working Group on Gender Statistics**, ensuring alignment with international frameworks set by European Institute for Gender Equality and the UN Statistical Office. The SDG Roadmap for Albania now

includes **15 gender-specific indicators**, reflecting an increased commitment to GE and monitoring progress in key areas. The UN’s technical guidance enabled **successful completion of the Data Gap Assessment of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025**, identifying essential child and youth well-being indicators. Governance structures for MICS 2025, including steering and technical committees, were established to strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration. Additionally, advocacy efforts led to the inclusion of a **dedicated Thematic Report on children and youth** in the Population and Household Census 2023, scheduled for release in 2025.

Through further strengthening of data accessibility, the UN supported the **update of the Child-Specific Indicators Platform** managed by the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection. This dashboard consolidates key data on child well-being and serves as a vital tool for policymakers, researchers and stakeholders.

In partnership with government entities and environmental NGOs, UN in Albania launched the **Climate Landscape Analysis for Children**, a

comprehensive assessment of the impact of climate change, energy policies, and disaster risk on children’s well-being. Findings from this analysis will inform child-sensitive climate policies and advocacy efforts in the country. The UN also contributed significantly to advancing Albania’s human rights framework, providing technical support for the **Action Plan for the 2023 Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations**. This plan, endorsed by the **National Council of Child Rights and Protection**, outlines **300 targeted actions**, ensuring alignment with Albania’s broader policy commitments and EU *acquis* chapters. Additionally, advocacy from the UN influenced Albania’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report, securing key recommendations on gender equality, social protection, child welfare, and equitable access to education.

The UN’s continued partnership with the **National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI)** supported Albania’s dialogue with the European Commission on **Chapter 25: Science and Research**, reinforcing research priorities within Albania’s reform agenda. Collaborative efforts between NASRI and the UN led to a revision of the **2024 research application guidelines**, prioritizing proposals addressing social and economic challenges faced by children and vulnerable groups. As a result, **13 per cent of the 2024–2025 scientific research programme budget** (\$277,097) was allocated to social research.

To further integrate research with social impact, NASRI and the UN facilitated capacity-building workshops on **Ethics and Integrity in Research Involving Children and Marginalized Populations**, engaging faculties and students from the universities of Shkoder, Tirana and Vlora. Expanding SDG monitoring capabilities, the UN facilitated the **addition of six gender-specific indicators** to Albania’s SDG Roadmap, increasing the total from seven to thirteen. **MICS implementation** addressed critical



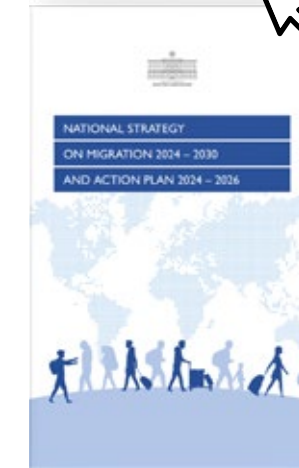
data gaps, while preparations for the **Census 2023 Post-enumeration Survey** ensured improved accuracy in national data collection. UN supported INSTAT in conducting the **Census 2023 Rebasing**, producing backward population estimates from **2011 to 2023** and developing a nine-part Euronews series on Albania’s demographic shifts. Census data are also informing key upcoming knowledge products for Albania, including its GE profile, being developed by the UN with the EU Delegation in Tirana, as well as other key partners such as the UN Gender Group, INSTAT, MoHSP, CSOs, NHRIs and others. UN-backed initiatives have also advanced **cultural data governance**, supporting the **Cultural Development Indicators Suite**, which provides insights into the country’s cultural sector and informs strategies for policy development. Meanwhile, an inclusive financing model was introduced to expand access to cultural and creative sector funding, ensuring that institutions, civil society, and individuals benefit equitably from financial resources.

Finalization of **Albania’s National Strategy on Migration (2024–2030)** and its **Action Plan (2024–2026)** provides a robust framework for addressing migration data gaps and ensuring evidence-based governance in this sector.

Through strategic interventions and institutional partnerships, Albania has made notable progress in modernizing its statistical systems and addressing critical data gaps. These efforts are instrumental in advancing equitable and sustainable development and ensuring evidence-

based policymaking. Continued investment in data governance, gender-disaggregated statistics, and cross-sectoral collaboration will be key to strengthening further Albania’s capacity to monitor SDG progress and implement targeted policy solutions.

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NATIONAL STRATEGY
ON MIGRATION
2024 – 2030



ADVANCING THE RIGHTS
OF CHILDREN AND
YOUTH

OUTPUT 3.4

Public sector accountability and quality services

SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 5.2, 16, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.10, 16.a, 17.1, 17.17



‘Fire Ideas – Not Guns’ - a campaign to ‘Strengthening Control, Management, and Social Reintegration of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Albania’. Photo: UNDP Albania

In terms of aligning its national development strategies with the SDGs, Albania has made considerable progress, particularly in integrating GE and social care into local development plans. Eighteen municipalities successfully incorporated these principles into their planning and budgeting processes, reinforcing sustainable decision making.

However, challenges remain in fully implementing gender-inclusive strategies, ensuring equitable access to services for minority groups and addressing governance gaps at the subnational level. Strengthening regional cooperation, advancing women’s participation in governance, and bolstering local climate adaptation and DRR efforts are essential for long-term resilience and sustainability.

Albania’s public administration reform advanced significantly in 2024, supported by UN initiatives focused on digital transformation and anti-corruption measures. Digital transformation readiness assessments were conducted across 61 municipalities, resulting in national and local reports that provide a foundation for the modernization of local service delivery.

The monitoring system for the National Cross-Cutting Strategy on Decentralization and Local Governance **was enhanced**, equipping the Agency for Support of Local Governance (ASLG) with improved tools to track progress and drive decentralization efforts. Notably, 46 per cent of municipalities (28 out of 61) approved integrity plans as part of corruption prevention initiatives, with ASLG receiving capacity-building support to design and monitor these plans effectively.

Efforts to combat corruption were further strengthened through the Regional Anti-Corruption Roadmap, refined through a UN-led conference. Additionally, 55 practitioners received specialized training in victim-centred investigations targeting human trafficking and smuggling. Governance capabilities were reinforced through leadership training for 450 public officials, enhancing their capacity to oversee inspection systems and drive institutional accountability.

Public sector efficiency was improved through the ISO 9001:2015 certification of five central government agencies. Furthermore, pilot programmes introducing performance appraisal methods were implemented in five institutions, fostering a culture of results-based governance. Increased digital governance and citizen engagement were evident in the expansion of the e-Albania portal, which reported 3,253,060 registered users in 2024, a milestone in digital service accessibility and public sector transparency.

In parallel, the UN **supported Albania’s European integration efforts** through the Knowledge for Reform Action in the Western Balkans programme, guiding harmonization with EU accession priorities. This initiative provided strategic guidance for Albania’s national reform agenda, focusing on enhancing public financial management and ensuring greater efficiency and transparency in government systems.

Key areas of focus include Cluster 5 (Chapters 11, 12, 22, 33), Cluster 3 (Chapters 10, 16, 17, 19, 20, 25, 26, 29) and Cluster 1 (Chapter 5), aligning Albania’s institutional frameworks with EU standards. Albania’s commitment to transparent, accountable and efficient public sector governance is reflected in the significant advancements made in digital transformation, anti-corruption initiatives and EU integration efforts.

Continued investment in institutional capacity building, regional collaboration and performance-based governance mechanisms will be essential for sustaining these achievements and fostering an inclusive, citizen-responsive public administration.



The monitoring system for the National Cross-Cutting Strategy on Decentralization and Local Governance was enhanced, equipping the Agency for Support of Local Governance (ASLG) with improved tools to track progress and drive decentralization efforts.

The Women Peace and Security Conference 2024, Tirana emphasized the crucial role women have in decision-making processes for peace and security. Photo: UN Women Albania



OUTPUT 3.5

Accountability and oversight for human rights

SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.a, 16.b, 17.9

In 2024, Albania made significant strides in aligning its legal and policy frameworks with international human rights standards, particularly in GE, child rights, and minority protection. However, implementation remains a challenge, particularly in strengthening the capacity and independence of NHRIs such as the People's Advocate and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. Delays in appointing key officials continue to hinder institutional effectiveness, while gaps persist in data collection, public sector accountability, and systemic enforcement of human rights norms.

Ensuring women's participation in security sectors, addressing GBV and aligning national laws with international frameworks such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) and UPR remain critical priorities.



A CEDAW Implementation Roadmap was developed and adopted, guiding the government in revising GE laws and ensuring that the new Criminal Code aligns with international standards on violence against women (VAW).

The UN has supported transformative initiatives aimed at strengthening Albania's human rights framework. A **CEDAW Implementation Roadmap** was developed and adopted, guiding the government in revising GE laws and ensuring that the **new Criminal Code aligns with international standards** on violence against women (VAW).

Additionally, the **People's Advocate played a crucial role** in monitoring pre-screening procedures and living conditions in temporary reception centres for irregular migrants, providing key recommendations to the General Department of Border and Migration Police. While progress has been made, gaps in pre-screening processes continue to result in **low referrals of asylum seekers** to the asylum system, a concern also highlighted in the EU Progress Report on Albania.

Advocacy efforts, in collaboration with international partners, aim to improve border procedures and reception conditions.

Justice for children was further promoted through a **landmark report by the People's Advocate**, identifying delays and gaps in the justice system. Advocacy campaigns on child rights included a widely disseminated joint op-ed by the People's Advocate, reaching 500 children, 100 teachers and 50 parents across 10 districts. These campaigns increased awareness of anti-discrimination laws and reinforced child protection mechanisms. Additionally, Parliament held three public hearings on child and adolescent rights, supported by the UN and fostering increased engagement and accountability among decision makers.

Children's direct engagement with independent human rights mechanisms also increased, with **30 complaints submitted formally by children**, highlighting strengthened access to justice. Albania's **UPR submission** further demonstrated its commitment to human rights accountability. Despite progress made, challenges such as **gender inequalities and persistent VAW** continue to be raised by Member

States. To support national follow-up efforts, the UN developed a **parallel submission**, which contributed to key UPR recommendations and will guide ongoing government action.

The **Academy of Human and Minority Rights** remains a flagship initiative, with its 2024 session engaging **22 young participants** (16 girls, 6 boys), along with **six alumni** from previous years. The academy continues to build youth leadership in human rights advocacy. Additionally, technical support to the **People's Advocate facilitated improvements in the case management system**, strengthening institutional responsiveness to complaints and violations.

UN engagement with the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population** focused on



enhancing knowledge of demographic trends and strengthening **policy formulation**. Efforts to improve data collection and evidence-based policymaking were critical in ensuring **human rights norms are integrated into national legislation and governance structures**.

Albania has made substantial progress in strengthening its human rights framework, aligning legal structures with international norms and enhancing engagement with independent human rights institutions. However, sustained investments in institutional capacity building, GE and justice system reforms are essential to achieving systemic improvements and ensuring the full realization of human rights for all. Continued UN collaboration will be key to addressing existing challenges and advancing Albania's human rights commitments.

Reporting Through a Gender Lens - Journalists as Key Allies. UN Women's annual Media Forum. Photo: UN Women Albania





IOM and Albanian Ministry of Interior in consultation to support drafting of National Strategy for Migration. Photo: IOM Albania

OUTPUT 3.6

Migration and asylum

SDG TARGETS: 3.8, 10.7, 16.2, 16.3, 16.9, 17.18

In 2024, Albania took a significant step towards modernizing its migration governance through adoption of the **National Strategy on Migration 2024–2030** and **Action Plan 2024–2026**. This comprehensive framework aligns with Albania’s EU accession priorities and the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**. It addresses key challenges such as high outmigration, misuse of visa-free movement and integration of vulnerable groups, particularly unaccompanied children. By embedding **gender-responsive and child-sensitive measures**, the Strategy reflects the country’s commitment to an **inclusive, rights-based migration system**. Despite improvements in legislation and a decline in asylum applications, challenges remain in **protecting migrant rights, improving data collection and integrating refugees and asylum seekers into public services**.

To strengthen migration governance, the UN supported **regional strategic and operational**

cooperation initiatives such as the **Western Balkans Joint Action Against Smuggling and Trafficking**. This programme enhanced Albania’s capacity to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking, introducing advanced digital investigations, victim-sensitive protection mechanisms and reintegration assistance for returning migrants. Improvements to the **Passenger Information Unit** also strengthened Albania’s border management, ensuring compliance with international standards.

Concrete steps were taken to **improve protection systems** for vulnerable migrants, particularly unaccompanied children. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were developed to provide specialized support, and **dedicated reception centres** were established to ensure proper care and protection. Further governance reforms include **revisions to the Law on Diaspora and the National Diaspora Strategy**, alongside the creation of **Centres for Migration and Diaspora** in all **61 municipalities**, fostering stronger

diaspora engagement and migration governance. The UN played a pivotal role in integrating child-sensitive and gender-responsive measures into migration policies, ensuring **alignment with EU standards**. Key contributions include the following:

- **Comprehensive support for 5,000+ Afghan refugees**, integrating child protection, psycho-social support, and **GBV prevention services**. Safe spaces were established for women and children, while specialized mental health services were provided to **350 individuals**, including children with disabilities.
- **Educational programmes for Afghan children and adolescents**, incorporating non-formal learning opportunities, socio-emotional skills development, and teacher training to foster community cohesion.
- **Cash assistance programmes** coupled with case management to **strengthen social protection** for vulnerable families, reducing reliance on negative coping mechanisms and enhancing resilience.
- **Enhanced coordination** with local authorities to integrate emergency response services into **national migration and asylum systems**, reinforcing Albania’s capacity to manage migration sustainably.
- **Stronger anti-trafficking frameworks** and advocacy for unaccompanied and separated children, in collaboration with two UN entities, addressing protection gaps and fostering **evidence-based interventions**.

Capacity-building efforts were also a key priority, with **60 police officers** receiving specialized training in **identifying and supporting asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants**. Consultative meetings involving **the State Police, Ombudsman and social services** led to the **development of a feasibility assessment of alternatives to immigration detention**, laying the groundwork for **rights-based migration practices**. Albania’s emergency response framework was significantly strengthened, with 6,431 Afghan refugees receiving integrated assistance covering child protection, education, healthcare, and social integration. The UN expanded its mobile teams to three new entry points – Korca, Gjirokaster

UN Agencies

IOM

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In 2024, Albania took a significant step towards modernizing its migration governance through adoption of the National Strategy on Migration 2024–2030 and Action Plan 2024–2026.

and Saranda – enhancing Albania’s capacity to manage mixed migration movements and ensuring a coordinated response with border police and NGOs.

In 2024, the UN observed a shift in migration routes through the Western Balkans, with fewer individuals using the Albanian corridor. Strengthened border management and enhanced controls by the Albanian Border and Migration Police, supported by Frontex operations, contributed to a 68 per cent decrease in arrivals compared to the previous year. Despite these changes, 1,388 refugees and migrants received targeted assistance to strengthen social cohesion in affected communities. The proportion of migrants and refugees referred to asylum procedures remained at six per cent. To further support protection mechanisms, three UN entities held workshops in Gjirokaster and Korca, bringing together 60 officials from the Department for Border Management, Ministry of Interior, municipal social services, child protection units, Frontex and NGOs. These workshops focused on the protection of vulnerable groups within mixed migration movements, ensuring that unaccompanied and separated children receive the necessary support. These efforts show the progress that Albania made in embedding child-sensitive and gender-responsive policies into national strategies while strengthening border management and protection mechanisms. Continued investment in social integration frameworks, data-driven policymaking, and regional cooperation will be crucial in addressing evolving migration challenges and ensuring Albania remains a leader in human-rights-based migration management.



Alignment with SDGs

4 5 8 11 16

Alignment with National
Development Goals

1 2 3

Alignment with EU Integration
Chapters & Priority Areas

5 10 22 23 24 32

OUTCOME 4

GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE



Raising awareness against human trafficking as part of UNICEF's national campaign #EVertetaN'Drit. Photo: UNICEF Albania

1,152 KILOMETRES OF HOPE:
CYCLING ACROSS ALBANIA IN
16 DAYS FOR A VIOLENCE-FREE
FUTURE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLSOver 16 days, a bold initiative swept through
Albania, blending the power of sport with a
compelling message to end gender-based violence...

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Albania has made notable progress on GE, with a strong legal framework and improvements in key gender indices, outperforming global averages. Significant challenges persist, particularly in GBV, women's economic participation, and access to justice.

Despite a legal framework addressing domestic violence (DV) and GE, VAW remains widespread, and marginalized groups such as Roma, Egyptian and LGBTI+ women face additional forms of discrimination and violence. Women's labour market participation remains low, especially in rural areas, and women's economic empowerment is hindered by unpaid work and limited access to resources.

While there have been advances in women's political participation and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), societal norms and stereotypes continue to impede true equality. Implementation of laws related to GE and child protection remains inconsistent, with child marriage and VAW remaining pressing issues.

Recent reforms, including legal changes to combat violence and improve women's representation in politics, have made progress, but challenges such as online violence and the inadequacy of mental health services for survivors of violence persist.

Lack of comprehensive support services for victims and the high prevalence of violence in both the home and online spaces underscore the urgent need for continued investment in GE, awareness raising and comprehensive support systems.

OUTPUT 4.1

End violence against women and children

SDG TARGETS: 4.4, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 11.6, 16.1, 16.2

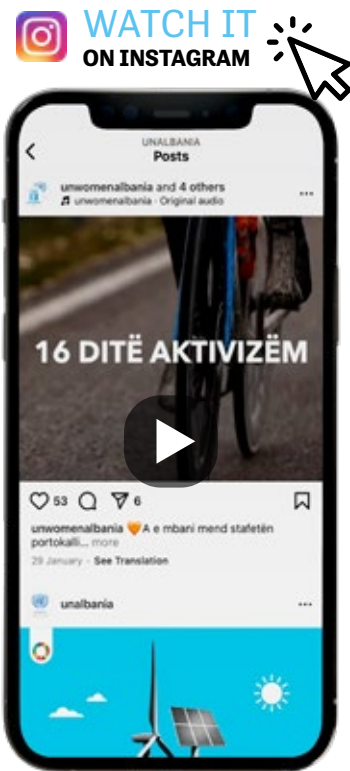
Violence against women in Albania remains a significant challenge despite legal and institutional progress. Women, particularly those from marginalized groups such as Roma, LGBTI+ and women with disabilities, continue to face GBV that is often underreported due to social, cultural and economic barriers. Although reforms in the Criminal Code and Gender Equality Law are being introduced, challenges persist in enforcement, institutional capacity and addressing deeply rooted gender stereotypes.

The EU Report on Albania (2024) recommends further alignment of GBV laws with the Istanbul Convention and enhanced accountability measures. Additionally, the first GREVIO thematic report highlights persistent gaps in institutional response mechanisms, data harmonization, and services for women with disabilities.

In 2024, the UN engaged in policy advocacy and institutional strengthening to combat GBV. Following UN and partner advocacy efforts, a dedicated department within MoHSP was established to focus on VAW. A comprehensive analysis of digital violence was conducted in partnership with Parliament, setting the stage for upcoming legal reforms.

Additionally, the Femicide Watch was established under the Ombudsperson of Albania, making it amongst the first national entity to apply global methodologies in tracking femicide trends, with its initial report released during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

The UN supported several initiatives to enhance institutional capacity and survivor support mechanisms. The national anti-trafficking helpline (#116 006) continued operations with the Ministry of Interior, ensuring survivors had access to immediate assistance. Nearly 1,250 Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM) professionals – including DV coordinators, social workers, health professionals, teachers and NGO representatives – were trained



in responding to violence against women and girls, enhancing multi-sectoral response networks.

Law enforcement capacity was strengthened through specialized training for 256 police officers from 27 police stations, focusing on DV legislation and victim-centred approaches. In parallel, 775 cases of violence were processed through the Recording Violence in Albania (REVALB) system, with 750 cases addressed via CRMs, ensuring 37 institutions had improved capacities to provide essential GBV services. Direct legal and psychological support reached over 1,300 survivors, including 130 Roma and Egyptian women, 389 rural women and 100 women with disabilities. Socio-economic reintegration services supported 341 women and 220 children, offering housing, employment assistance, legal aid, and psychological counselling.



'Stop' there is 'No Excuse' —the powerful message for 2024 #16Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Photo: UN Women Albania



Direct legal and psychological support reached **1,669 survivors**, including **130 Roma and Egyptian women**, **389 rural women** and **100 women with disabilities**.

Expanding support for youth mental health, 155 adolescents accessed online counselling and mental health services. The UN's partnership with national and local actors led to the establishment of Resilience Centres in Durres, Kurbin and Lezha, enhancing institutional responses to gender-based discrimination and violence.

Within these municipalities, 10 Needs Assessment and Referral Units were established to identify and address intersectional vulnerabilities, benefiting 165 staff (145 women, 20 men) trained to improve case management of GBV survivors.

ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

Public awareness efforts engaged over one million individuals, with 645,000 people reached through innovative initiatives, including a bike relay during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. 43 journalists (2 men) were trained to develop gender-sensitive media reports, promoting nuanced public discourse. Meanwhile, an ILO Convention 190 awareness campaign engaged 20 private companies, fostering safer work environments and equitable labour practices.

Youth engagement was a key focus, with five new 'Be a Man' clubs established in Cerrik, Kavaja, Klos, Patos and Rrogozhina, expanding to a total of 14 operational clubs nationwide. These clubs engaged 685 youth (363 female, 322 male) in peer education and



Empowerment through self-defense. Photo: UN Women Albania

advocacy. The We Bike for Gender Equality campaign mobilized 407 youth (217 female, 190 male), amplifying community voices on GBV prevention.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY AND FAITH-BASED NETWORKS (FBOs)

Mapping and engagement with FBOs in Durres, Fier and Shkoder facilitated dialogue between Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical communities on their role in GBV prevention. Efforts included discussions around an MoU to create a sustainable network for joint advocacy activities. Two workshops, in Pogradec and Vlora, strengthened

collaboration between religious leaders and the CRM, engaging 43 participants. The UN played a critical role in strengthening child protection mechanisms. One-Stop Centres in Fier and Shkoder provided specialized services to 27 child victims of DV, while 85 high-risk children received emergency shelter and protection services. Additionally, 563 children in contact with the law received legal aid, psychological counselling, and case management, including 224 children in conflict with the law, 139 witnesses of abuse and 200 survivors of violence. To further reinforce systemic response, the UN facilitated workshops on digital literacy and violence prevention, reaching 99 youth and teachers.



Women and men activists and officials from justice and local support services are honored for their contribution to prevention of violence against women and girls. Photo: UN Women Albania

Technical support was provided to the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop an action plan on school-based violence and bullying prevention, ensuring a safe learning environment for children.

ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The UN strengthened its collaboration with anti-trafficking shelters, ensuring 22 children (14 female, 8 male) survivors of trafficking and 23 dependents received reintegration support. Mobile units operating in Diber, Kukes, Shkoder and Tirana identified 32 trafficked children and 8 dependents, enhancing early identification and case management. Multifunctional Community Centres delivered human trafficking prevention messages to 1,055 individuals and engaged 337 youth in psycho-social counselling and participatory research.

Albania has taken significant steps in addressing GBV, enhancing legal protections, institutional responses and public awareness. The establishment of specialized support centres has expanded legal aid services and nationwide advocacy campaigns have contributed to a more survivor-centred approach than previously. However, sustained investment in mental health services, outreach to marginalized groups and long-term policy alignment with international frameworks remain critical to achieving transformative change and ensuring a violence-free society for all.

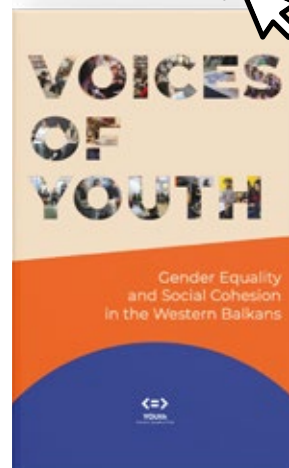
OUTPUT 4.2

Addressing gender stereotypes and harmful norms and practices

SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 16.7, 16.10

Despite the prohibition of child marriage in Albania, the practice persists, especially among Roma and Egyptian communities and in remote rural areas, driven by gender inequality, poverty and social exclusion. There is a need for more effective enforcement of existing laws and the development of targeted policies to address this issue. Additionally, persistent gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices hinder social cohesion and GE, as highlighted in a recent UN Women study. The study suggests solutions such as using technology and social media for raising awareness, promoting equal access to education and labour and ensuring equal representation in decision making to foster civic engagement and social cohesion.

To address these systemic challenges, the UN implemented a range of strategic initiatives aimed at dismantling harmful gender norms and stereotypes. Through the regional campaign 'Imagine' influencers and activists engaged more than four million people across the Western Balkans, fostering widespread awareness of GBV and discriminatory practices. In addition, the campaign trained 135 young men and boys to serve as peer educators on GE, amplifying community-level change. The UN also supported a dedicated study on GE and women's participation in sports in Albania. The study provides more evidence and analysis of the legal, policy and institutional

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frameworks around GE and sports in the country and offers guidance and best practices on integrating gender perspectives across all aspects of sports. The study was used to increase awareness of gender and sports for 80 sports teachers (9 men) at the University of Sports and across the media, including 18 sports journalists (9 women), and through dedicated TV discussions.

Efforts to reshape societal attitudes extended to 56 students in Elbasan, Shkoder and Vlora, who participated in 'Fatherhood Reinvented: Empowering Modern Dads' forums. These discussions raised awareness of gender roles in parenting and family dynamics, promoting positive fatherhood models. Furthermore, 400 local changemakers were trained to lead GE initiatives, positioning them as role models within their communities. A transformative bootcamp, 'Change Begins with You', convened 21 university students (14 women, 7 men) from various disciplines, including journalism, IT, law, social sciences, and finance. Participants developed five innovative solutions to combat GBV, demonstrating cross-sectoral engagement in addressing gender norms. To amplify youth voices, the UN launched the Global U-Report initiative, providing an interactive platform for discussions on gender norms. This effort empowered 26 young peacebuilders – 20 of whom were women – to tackle gender-based discrimination in crisis situations. Additionally, a national needs assessment on teenage pregnancies engaged 200 young women, identifying gaps in reproductive health awareness and underscoring the need for comprehensive education programmes targeting adolescents and their families.



Football Federation and UN Women run a mini-football tournament to raise awareness for breast cancer. Photo: UN Women Albania

The study 'Perception of Men and Boys Regarding Gender Equality' was presented at the Fifth National Forum on Men and Boys Who Inspire for Gender Equality, which brought together representatives from NGOs, donor communities, local governments, academia and youth networks. The study involved a representative sample of 626 young men of age 15–29 years from 12 cities across Albania, offering critical insights into male perspectives on GE.

The 'Boys and Men Who Inspire, V' Forum, held on 17 December 2024, brought together stakeholders from government, faith-based communities, academia and civil society. The increased participation of men and boys in this year's forum marked a growing commitment to GE advocacy. The event convened multiple stakeholders¹² from local and national institutions.

Albania has made measurable progress in challenging gender stereotypes and dismantling harmful norms through policy interventions, community engagement and youth empowerment

initiatives. The expansion of awareness campaigns, gender-responsive research, and educational programmes is essential for the creation of a more inclusive society. Sustained investments and cross-sector collaboration will be crucial in ensuring transformative change and gender equality for future generations.



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12. 20 NGO representatives were present, along with 2 donors (GIZ, and Italian Development Agency), 40 young boys, 10 municipal representatives, 5 from academia, 4 from the LGBTIQ+ community, 4 from MoHSP, 8 from the Roma and Egyptian communities, and 9 presidents of student government bodies.

OUTPUT 4.3

Gender-responsive planning and budgeting

SDG TARGETS: 5.4, 5.a, 5.c

Albania has taken significant strides in strengthening gender-responsive planning and budgeting at both the central and local government levels. Institutional capacities have improved, allowing for better integration of gender equality and women's empowerment priorities into fiscal policies and budgetary processes. Since 2022, the number of government institutions applying GRB has increased from 10 to 24, demonstrating a systemic shift toward equity-focused resource allocation.

A major milestone in 2024 was the finalization of the GRB annex for the 2025–2027 Medium-Term

Budget Programme. This annex aligns with the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021–2030, embedding gender objectives into Albania's fiscal planning across social protection, education, health and rural development. With 59 per cent of budgetary programmes for 2025 incorporating gender-specific objectives, GRB is now driving more equitable resource distribution and policy implementation.

To enhance institutional capacity, 120 officials from line ministries and budgetary institutions received training in integrating gender objectives and performance indicators into fiscal processes. These

Meeting on gender-responsive budgeting. Photo: UN Women Albania



initiatives have strengthened gender-sensitive public investment management and informed Albania's broader Public Financial Management Strategy. Mechanisms for ex-ante and ex-post gender analyses of public expenditures were introduced, enabling data-driven evaluations of fiscal policies' gender impact. The financial impact of GRB reforms has been substantial. In 2024, 9.1 per cent of Albania's public funding was allocated to GE-related policies, supporting:

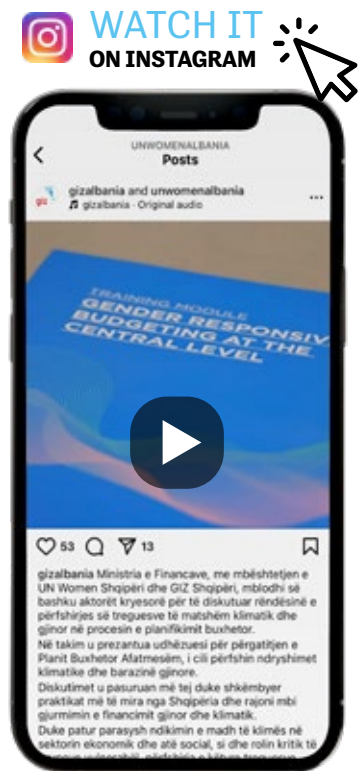
- Services for **29,000+ women survivors of violence**
- Economic assistance for **8,090 female-headed households**
- Maternal and child health programmes benefiting **51,500 mothers and children**.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Albania's first gender audit methodology was developed in collaboration with the State Supreme Audit, providing a systematic framework for evaluating gender considerations in public policies and expenditures. This initiative ensures greater transparency and compliance with GE commitments. Moreover, two municipalities (Elbasan and Lushnja) increased their budget for delivering VAW services following an analysis of the municipalities' financial gap for effectively addressing VAW cases, with a total increase of ALL 2,500,000.00 in the municipalities' budget, which will be considered as an example and best practice for replication in other municipalities and supports gender responsive budgeting at local level.



A major milestone in 2024 was the finalization of the GRB annex for the 2025–2027 Medium-Term Budget Programme. In 2024, 9.1 per cent of Albania's public funding was allocated to GE-related policies.



EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING AND CHILD BUDGETING

The UN played a key role in strengthening gender-disaggregated data collection, ensuring evidence-based policymaking. Training sessions engaged stakeholders from the justice, healthcare and education sectors, equipping them with tools to collect and utilize gender-sensitive data aligned with Albania's SDG commitments.

The UN supported analysis of public spending on children, applying budget markers for child-focused allocations in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. Findings from this analysis underscored the need for increased investment in basic social services – particularly in health, education and social protection – to drive sustainable child-responsive budgeting.

By embedding gender-sensitive approaches into fiscal policies and planning, Albania is making substantial progress toward GE and inclusive governance. Continued investment in capacity building, policy alignment and public sector accountability will be key to fully institutionalizing GRB practices and ensuring equitable resource allocation for all.



A group exercise during the Training of Trainers on women's political participation. Photo UN Women Albania

OUTPUT 4.4

Gender equality mechanisms & Leadership and participation

SDGs TARGETS: 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.a, 5.c

Albania has made notable progress in promoting GE, with strong achievements in GRB and women's representation in politics and leadership, surpassing the EU average in the GE Index. Women hold 35.7 per cent of parliamentary seats, lead half of the Assembly's permanent commissions and constitute more than half of ministerial roles. However, significant challenges remain, including GBV, underrepresentation in the labour market and limited access to resources such as land, especially in rural areas. Traditional gender norms and systemic inequalities continue to hinder women's personal and professional development, underscoring the need for improved gender statistics, strengthened institutional coordination and expanded support services to address disparities effectively.

OUTPUT 4.5

In 2024, Albania is strengthening its GE framework through revision of the law 'On Gender Equality in Society', enhancing political quotas and institutional mechanisms. The country also hosted a regional conference on the Beijing Platform for Action, reaffirming its commitment to advancing GE and enhancing national GE structures.

At the local governance level, the UN played a key role in supporting women's participation in decision making. The programme 'Improving Community Resilience', implemented by the UN, provided capacity building for women municipal councillors, strengthening their roles in advocating for social care policies that benefit vulnerable populations. This effort has empowered women leaders to take an active role in municipal planning, decision making and oversight

UN Agencies

UN WOMEN

UNDP

FAO



In 2024, Albania strengthened its GE framework through revision of the law 'On Gender Equality in Society', enhancing political quotas and institutional mechanisms.

Albania has made substantial progress in GE, leadership and economic participation, with strong policy commitments and institutional reforms. However, continued investment, multi-sectoral collaboration and gender-disaggregated data collection will be critical in ensuring transformative and lasting change.

By further embedding gender-responsive policies into governance and economic structures, Albania is well-positioned to achieve greater inclusivity and equity for all women and girls.

processes, fostering greater inclusivity in governance. Women's leadership initiatives also resulted in the training of 30 expert trainers (29 women, 1 man) to support women candidates in the 2025 central elections and build capacities of local women councillors across Albania. UN Women supported specialized training for newly elected councillors, ensuring they are equipped to navigate governance structures effectively.

GENDER EQUALITY IN AGRICULTURE AND LAND RIGHTS

GE in agriculture and rural development advanced through policy recommendations based on EU best practices. Workshops were conducted to enhance rural women's skills in traditional product development and market engagement, supporting their economic empowerment. Additionally, advocacy efforts strengthened gender-specific land indicators, ensuring that data-sharing mechanisms improve accountability and monitoring.

Through continued advocacy, awareness among 58 national and regional officials (41 women, 17 men) on gender-sensitive land-related SDG indicators (5.a.1 and 5.a.2) was improved. Two workshops and training sessions increased knowledge on the importance of monitoring and reporting gender-sensitive land ownership. Additionally, through sustained collaboration with SASPAC, gender-responsive land indicators were incorporated into the draft SDG Roadmap 2030.

Empowering women in politics: UN Women certifies fourteen trainers on political leadership and candidate training. Photo: UN Women Albania



Box 1: Regional Programmes under implementation in 2024

Regional programmes continue to be catalytic to achieving results and fostering exchanges across the region. Their efforts contribute to results across the four Outcomes of the UNSDCF.

UNSCF 2022–2026 Outcomes	Programme	Duration	Implementing Partners	Key Focus
Outcome 1: Human Capital Development	Roadmap for Health and Well-being in the Western Balkans	2021–2025	WHO/Europe, CEI, RCC, SEEHN	Strengthening health systems and investments in critical areas
	Strengthening Health Systems Resilience in the Western Balkans	2021–2023 (extended until June 2025)	WHO	Enhancing essential health services and increasing resilience
Outcome 2: Environment, Climate Change	Climate Proofing for Sustainable Development in the Western Balkans	2023–2027	UNEP	Integrating climate resilience into national policies
	Experience Exchange: Central Asia & Western Balkans on Climate & Biodiversity	2024–2025	UNEP	Transposing climate-informed biodiversity conservation strategies
	Subregional Intergovernmental Partnerships for Green Agenda	2025–2026	UNEP, IUCN	Advancing biodiversity protection (Pillar V of Green Agenda)
	Phasing out Mercury Measuring Devices in Healthcare	2024–2028	UNEP, WHO	Eliminating mercury-containing devices to reduce environmental impact
	Culture and Creativity for Western Balkans	2022–2026	EU, UNESCO	Strengthening cultural and creative sectors for socio-economic impact
	Employment and Social Affairs Platform	2024–2028	ILO, RCC	Promoting fair and well-functioning labour markets
	Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality & Trust	2024–2026	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNESCO	Countering divisive narratives and hate speech
	Local Democracy in Western Balkans (ReLOaD2)	2021–2025	UNDP	Supporting transparent public funding for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
	Western Balkans Joint Actions against Smuggling of Migrants	2021–2025	IOM	Strengthening protection efforts against smuggling and trafficking
	Improving Reintegration Outcomes for Survivors of Modern Slavery	2024–2025	IOM	Mapping reintegration services in Albania, Brazil, China, India and Pakistan
Outcome 3: Governance, Rule of Law, Human Rights	Western Balkan Integrated Border Management Facility	Ongoing	IOM	Enhancing border management and security
	Western Balkan Readmission Capacity Building Facility	Ongoing	IOM	Strengthening migration management and cooperation
	EU Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management Systems – Phase III	Ongoing	IOM	Improving migration policies and crisis response
	Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in the Western Balkans	Ongoing	IOM	Supporting migrant response and data collection
	Knowledge for Reform Action in the Western Balkans programme	Ongoing	UNOPS	Support of EU accession process
	Strengthening Socio-Economic Integration of Returnees	2020–2024	UNDP	Supporting reintegration policies for returnees
	Transformative Financing for Gender Equality	2020–2024 (extended until June 2025)	UN Women	Integrating gender equality into national policies and budgeting
	Making Every Woman and Girl Count in Europe & Central Asia – Phase II	2022–2025	UN Women	Enhancing gender data production and use

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR RURAL AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Despite notable progress in social protection, education, and healthcare, ensuring comprehensive coverage for rural and marginalized groups remains a persistent challenge. Inadequate service delivery—stemming from gaps in local institutional capacity, coordination shortcomings, and underinvestment in alternative care and education systems—calls for a holistic strategy. This challenge requires enhancing local capacities, strengthening inclusive governance mechanisms, and coordinating investments across sectors to sustainably bridge service gaps and foster resilient communities.

BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The transition to a green and blue economy faces persistent challenges due to underfunding, fragmented policies, and climate-induced vulnerabilities. Strengthening regional collaboration, increasing targeted investments in resilience-building measures, and expanding private-sector engagement in sustainable practices are necessary for long-term economic and environmental sustainability. Ensuring that climate adaptation strategies are inclusive and equitable will be crucial for fostering resilience across all communities.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR DATA-DRIVEN GOVERNANCE AND ROBUST HUMAN RIGHTS OVERSIGHT

While progress in governance reforms and public sector accountability is evident, institutional constraints in systematic data collection, legal service delivery, and oversight mechanisms continue to limit the effectiveness of evidence-based policymaking. Addressing these structural challenges requires a comprehensive overhaul of institutional capacities, including the adoption of advanced digital transparency tools and improved coordination among agencies. This will not only enhance the reliability of data across sectors but also ensure that human rights frameworks are effectively monitored and enforced, thereby bolstering public trust and sustainable governance.

2.2. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

In 2024, UN agencies collaborated via results and thematic groups to execute planned initiatives, utilizing a programmatic approach grounded in results-based management principles. The four Results Groups made significant strides in implementing the UNSDCF while, at the same time, aligning with Albania's national priorities. As detailed in the present report, their joint efforts achieved impactful results, including strengthening social protection to ensure inclusivity, addressing violence against women and children, improving local governance and promoting the SDGs alongside sustainable business practices through private sector partnerships in key industries. These achievements were highlighted during the Joint Executive Committee (JEC)'s annual meeting held on 25 November 2024, where progress was assessed and priorities for the coming year were collaboratively set.

The Gender Thematic and Results Group (GTRG), chaired by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Representative and including 14 UN entities, convened quarterly. The UN RC attended regularly and more than 90 per cent of the workplan activities for the year were completed or initiated. Achievements in 2024 include the following:

- **Sustained contribution to implementing normative commitments on Gender Equality (GE).** The GTRG led the UN Albania engagement on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) 4th cycle, including by through development of a dedicated UNCT submission that was shared with the UPR in April 2024. The Group supported the development and implementation of a dedicated Government of Albania Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Implementation Roadmap to address the 2023

CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations for Albania. Among the actions in the roadmap, GTRG focused on supporting a review of the GE Law, providing technical support and promoting multi-stakeholder consultations. The amended Law is currently being costed and will be posted for public consultations in Q1 2025. GTRG also reviewed and provided comments on the Criminal Code, Reproductive Health Law and the Strategy for Employment Safety. Comments were shared with the leading agency or institution drafting the documents for consideration and aiming to increase gender mainstreaming and GE considerations across these policies and programmes.

- **Joint advocacy efforts** to promote GE were significantly increased. The Group issued a [joint advocacy piece on violence against women with disabilities](#) on 3 December 2024, during the 16 Days campaign, and engaged in innovative awareness-raising efforts including a dedicated bike relay that crossed 16 Albanian cities, reaching more than 400 people directly and around 2 million viewers on social media.
- **Improved UNCT accountability for gender mainstreaming.** The [UNCT system-wide action plan \(SWAP\) Scorecard](#) report showed sustained performance improvement by UN Albania, judged as exceeding requirements in 11 of the 15 indicators assessed, compared to 8 in 2019. Only one indicator (Performance Indicator 4.3: Gender Parity) was rated as missing the requirements and a dedicated Action Plan was developed to ensure sustained efforts in positive performance of UNCT Albania across all dimensions. The assessment exercise engaged multiple UN agencies through a dedicated Inter-agency Assessment Team,



Fifty changemakers came together at Albania's first Gender Dataathon to champion change with gender data. Photo: UN Women

composed of representatives from the RCO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

- **UN personnel has enhanced capacities for gender mainstreaming and GE.** In October 2024, 45 UN personnel (10 men; 35 women) from nine UN agencies attended a [dedicated session on gender, digitalization and artificial intelligence](#), developing their skills through practical sessions on the creation of a custom, gender-sensitive, generative pre-trained transformer to assist with reporting and communication, and an interactive activity to prepare a joint initiative on gender, digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI).
- **Increased resources for joint programming.** GBP 150,000 from the UK Government was mobilized in support of implementation of [UNSDCF 2022–2026](#) Outcome 4 on Gender-Responsive Governance. Additional complementary funds were allocated to the ongoing UN Joint Programme Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) Phase II, which is being supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and implemented by UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA, with a focus on engagement of men and boys (linked to UNSDCF

output 4.2). This effort is enhancing the capacities and networks of Domestic Violence coordinators across the country (linked to UNSDCF output 4.1), and is the first time that an ongoing UN Joint Programme (JP) has received an additional, complementary contribution from a different donor.

- **Increased availability of cutting-edge knowledge on GE and women's empowerment in the country.** The launch of the development process of the new country GE profile will provide a joint analysis of persisting gender-related challenges and inform the forthcoming UN Common Country Analysis (CCA). For the first time, the profile will be developed in collaboration among UN Women, other UN agencies and the EU Delegation in Albania, in line with recent guidance from the Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan.

UNCT Albania has taken significant steps in promoting and protecting **human rights** through various strategic initiatives. The efforts include monitoring and addressing urgent human rights issues, with notable visits from the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and the UN Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination



UN Albania Operations Management Team reflect on business efficiencies during Annual Review. Photo: UN Albania

based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Team has also spearheaded advocacy on GE, violence against women with disabilities, and LGBTI rights, publishing position papers, joint op-eds, and organizing events such as International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism. UNCT has actively supported Albania's reporting processes under CEDAW, CRC, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and UPR, integrating concluding observations and recommendations into the Cooperation Framework. Additionally, the UN has facilitated high-level discussions with the diplomatic community on UPR recommendations and human rights priorities, while also preparing for the 2024 Beijing +30 process and the UNCT SWAP and Disability Inclusion Scorecard Comprehensive Analysis. Through ongoing support to the People's Advocate, including capacity building and advocacy, the UN has enhanced Albania's human rights mechanisms, although challenges, such as a delay in appointing a new People's Advocate, remain. Overall, these efforts underline the UN's role in advancing human rights in Albania, aligning with the country's goals of strengthening its justice sector and contributing to regional and global peacebuilding.

Guided by the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, UNCT Albania made notable progress in **disability inclusion** through concrete actions and measurable results. Using Development Coordination Office Seed Funding, the team completed renovation of the Lushnja Multifunctional Community Centre, ensuring full accessibility for persons with disabilities (PwD). In education, 418 teachers were trained in inclusive practices, special schools were converted into resource centres and more than 310 new signs were added to the Albanian sign language dictionary. Personal assistance services and

youth volunteer models were piloted in Korca, while municipal-level efforts improved access to community networks and provided tailored services for families and children with disabilities. Additionally, through the Leave No One Behind (LNB) joint programme, UN helped three municipalities assess and meet the needs of women with disabilities, including through provision of assistive devices and family support systems.

Data and advocacy work also saw major achievements. Census analysis and mid-term reviews of the National Action Plan for PwD led to evidence-based recommendations for improving policies and services. More than 1,000 professionals and 122 multidisciplinary staff were trained to support children with disabilities. The UN recruited a volunteer with a disability and created a database of graduates with disabilities to increase their access to job opportunities. Such initiatives reflect practical steps being taken towards inclusive development and systemic reform in Albania.

In 2021, UNCT Albania established an Inter-agency Task Force, under the overall strategic supervision of the UN RC and with 13 appointed focal points, working as a dedicated UNCT-wide entity committed to **prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse**. In 2023, the Task Force jointly updated the SOPs that outline the steps and measures to be taken in suspected or alleged cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, in line with the latest guidelines. The Task Force held regular meetings and, in coordination with UNCT, developed the 2024 Action Plan, leveraging insights gained from monitoring the advancements made in 2023. The UN **Youth** Task Force (UNYTF), chaired by UNICEF with support from the RCO, achieved several key results

in promoting youth empowerment in 2024. UNYTF facilitated collaboration with the Minister of State for Youth and Children to align efforts on the National Youth Strategy, including coordination on the National Youth Grants' Scheme and review of the Laws on Youth and Volunteerism. The new UN **Youth** Advisory Group actively engaged in UN initiatives, offering input on the Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 and revisions to key youth-related laws. It also participated in regional events on women's rights, ethics and youth advocacy in agriculture and digital opportunities, highlighting their role in shaping policies and key discussions. UN Youth Delegates (UNYDs) discussed with UNCT follow-up actions from the 'Summit for the Future', focusing on youth engagement in peace, AI-driven skills, employment, economic growth and climate action.

The UN Albania joint **communication** in 2024 focused on advocacy efforts and highlighted the tangible results of the work of the UN system in Albania. More than 200 high-quality multimedia content pieces and a comprehensive Annual Progress Report (also available as a web-based e-Report for easier access) ensured full public transparency and accountability of the work in the country. Notable achievements include successful GE campaigns, with key initiatives around International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism, particularly focused on ending GBV.

A major event on UN Day, with wide public reach through a partnership with the government via its Cultural International Weeks initiative, delivered important messages on fostering peace and multilateralism alongside a well-curated 'Sounds of Unity' concert, featuring artists from marginalized groups. As part of the UN–EU joint strategic advocacy, four joint Op-Eds authored by the EU Delegation Ambassador in Albania and the RC called for action in the areas of GE, homophobia and transphobia, air pollution and promoting the universality of human rights, through strategic cooperation due to continue in 2025. Internal communications, through comprehensive RC briefs and messages and various team-building gatherings, also played a vital role in empowering and inspiring UN staff to engage actively in advocacy and communications, supporting broader objectives for a sustainable future for Albania. With a steady year-on-year increase in reach of more than 10 per cent, the [UN Albania website](#), the quarterly 'Delivering for Development' newsletter and the joint



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social media channels managed by the RCO were essential outlets to reach stakeholders and the public.

In 2024, the United Nations **Operations Management Team** (OMT) in Albania achieved significant progress in operational efficiency, sustainability and digital transformation. Key results included optimizing procurement processes through Long-Term Agreements, saving \$169,154 and improving service delivery with a total expenditure of \$2.73 million. The Team also advanced its business operations strategy, integrating sustainability into core processes and enhancing collaboration with local authorities and vendors to improve service quality and transparency. The OMT made strides in human resource harmonization by aligning human resources practices across UN agencies, ensuring compliance with UN regulations and Albanian labour laws. Staff capacity-building initiatives focused on gender-responsive procurement and sustainability practices, enhancing overall workforce competencies. Successful implementation of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers strengthened financial transparency, while advocacy efforts secured VAT exemptions for donors, reducing costs and maximizing impact. Additionally, the OMT promoted inclusivity through improved workplace policies for PwD and reinforced a zero-tolerance policy of harassment and abuse of authority. Looking ahead, the OMT initiated groundwork to update local consultancy rates and salary scales to reflect market conditions, ensuring competitiveness and fairness. These updates will enhance the recruitment and retention of skilled professionals while supporting high-quality consultancy services.

2.3. Financial overview and resource mobilisation

For implementation of UNSDCF 2022–2026 in 2024, the 19 UN agencies in Albania had a budget available of \$76 million (Figure 1), with core resources of \$5.7 million (7%) and mobilised resources of \$70.8 million (93%). The utilisation rate by the end of 2024 was 89 per cent: i.e., the UN system delivered interventions worth \$68 million, with the balance carried over into 2025.

The largest financial portfolio continued to be that of Human Capital Development, followed by, in decreasing order of portfolio size, Green Growth, Innovation and Climate Change; Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights; and Gender-Responsive Governance.

At the output level, delivery was largest for outputs 1.2 Education, and 2.2 Sustainable and resilient economic growth and transition, followed closely by 3.6 Migration and asylum (Figure 2).

UNDP remains the UN agency with the largest portfolio of funds delivered (49%; Figure 3) and activities implemented across all four strategic areas in 2024, followed by UNOPS and UNICEF (14% each).

The non-core budget in 2024 consisted of contributions to the ASDG-AF and bilateral contributions mobilised through agreements with individual UN agencies at the country, regional and global levels.

Figure 1. Budget and delivery (\$ million), January–December 2024

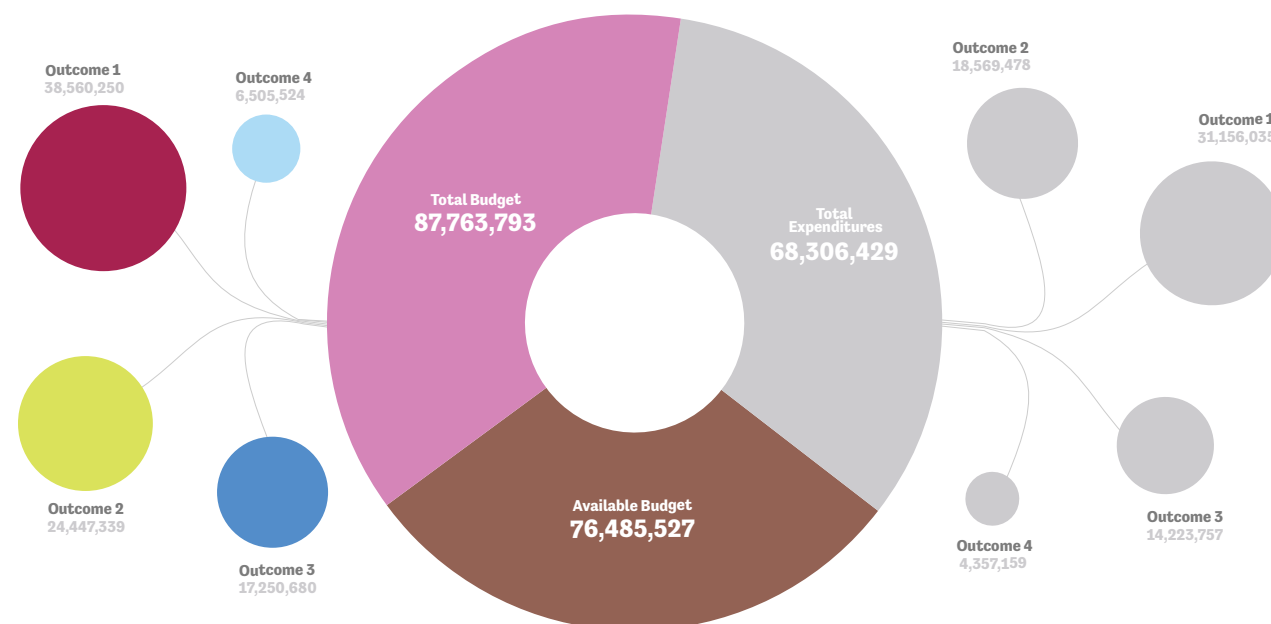


Figure 2. Output delivery 2024

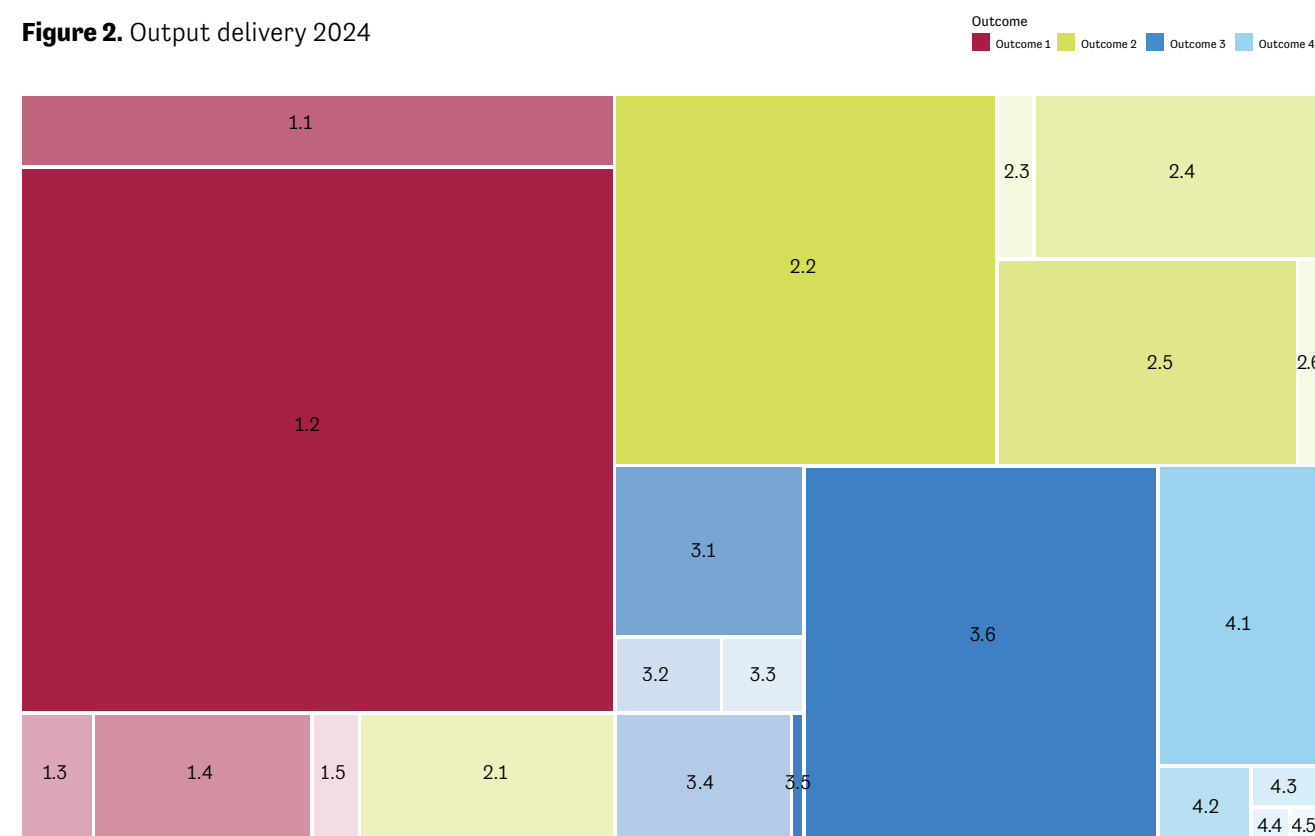


Figure 3. Expenditure per UN Agency 2024

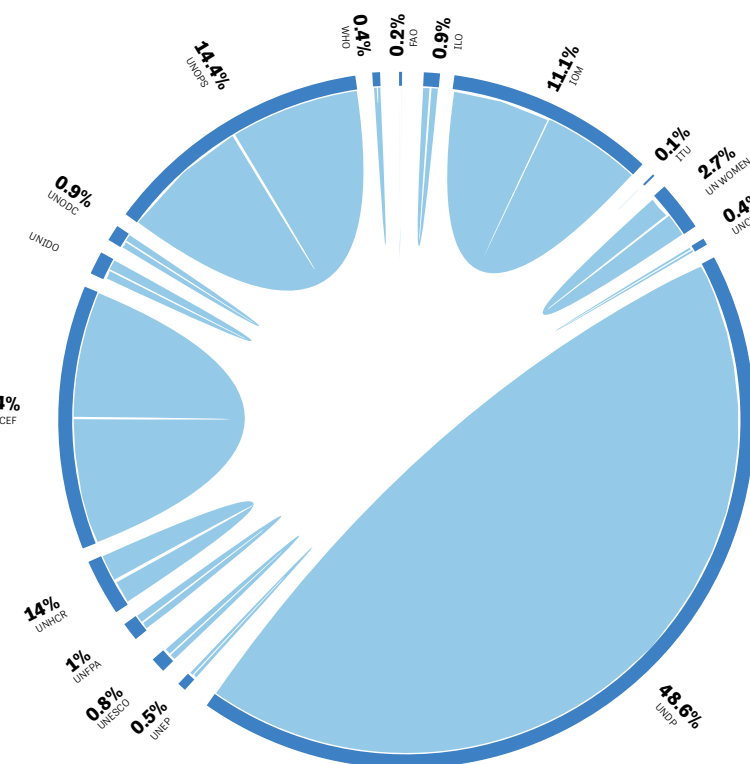
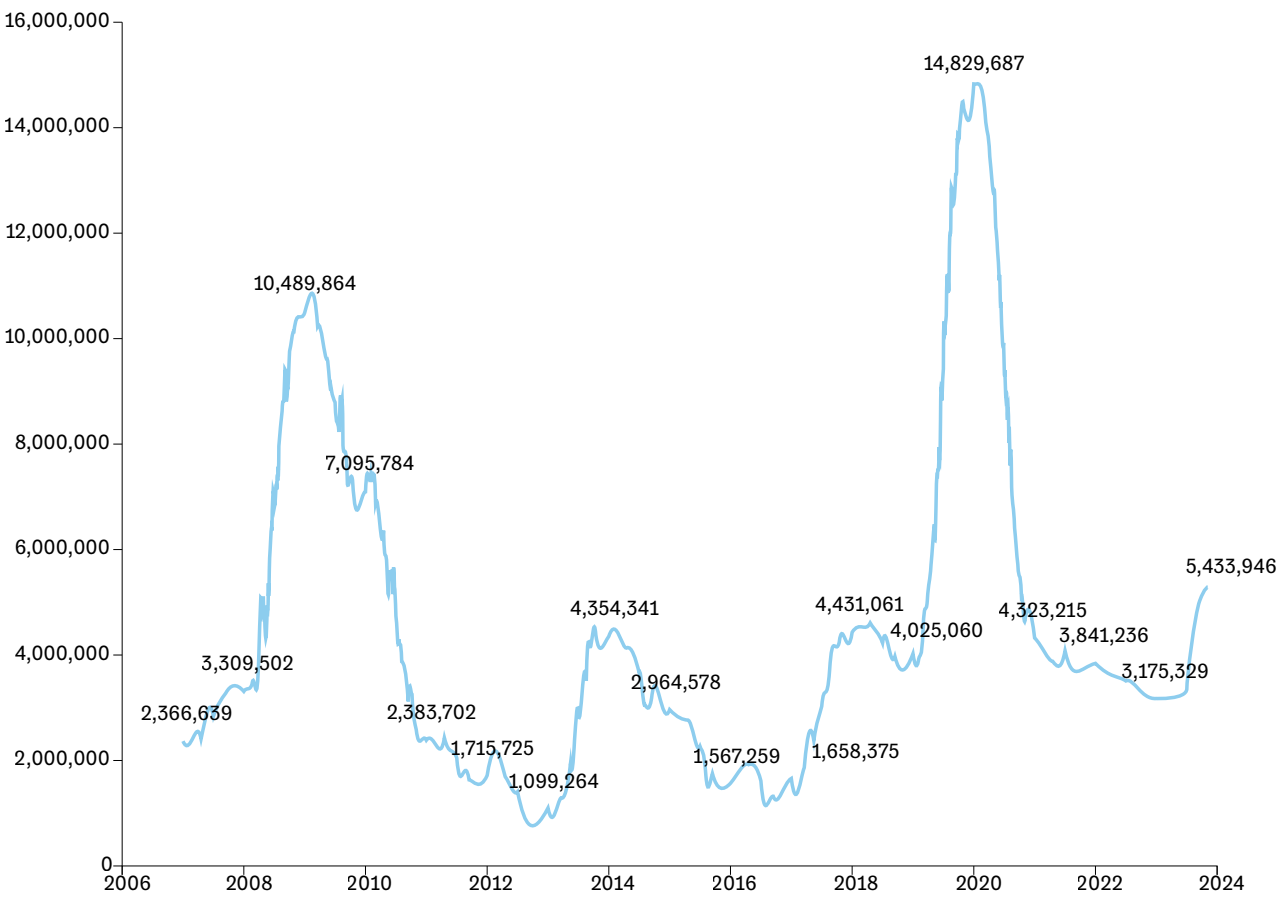


Figure 4. SDG Acceleration Fund (USD), 2007–2024



ASDG-AF has been instrumental in enhancing the strategic alignment and concerted UN efforts towards SDG acceleration. Both phase I and phase II Funds have played a crucial role since 2019, especially in supporting post-earthquake recovery initiatives in areas such as education, social protection, gender, child protection, economic recovery and resilience, agriculture, DRR and community infrastructure, generating increased interest from partners as a cost-effective vehicle.

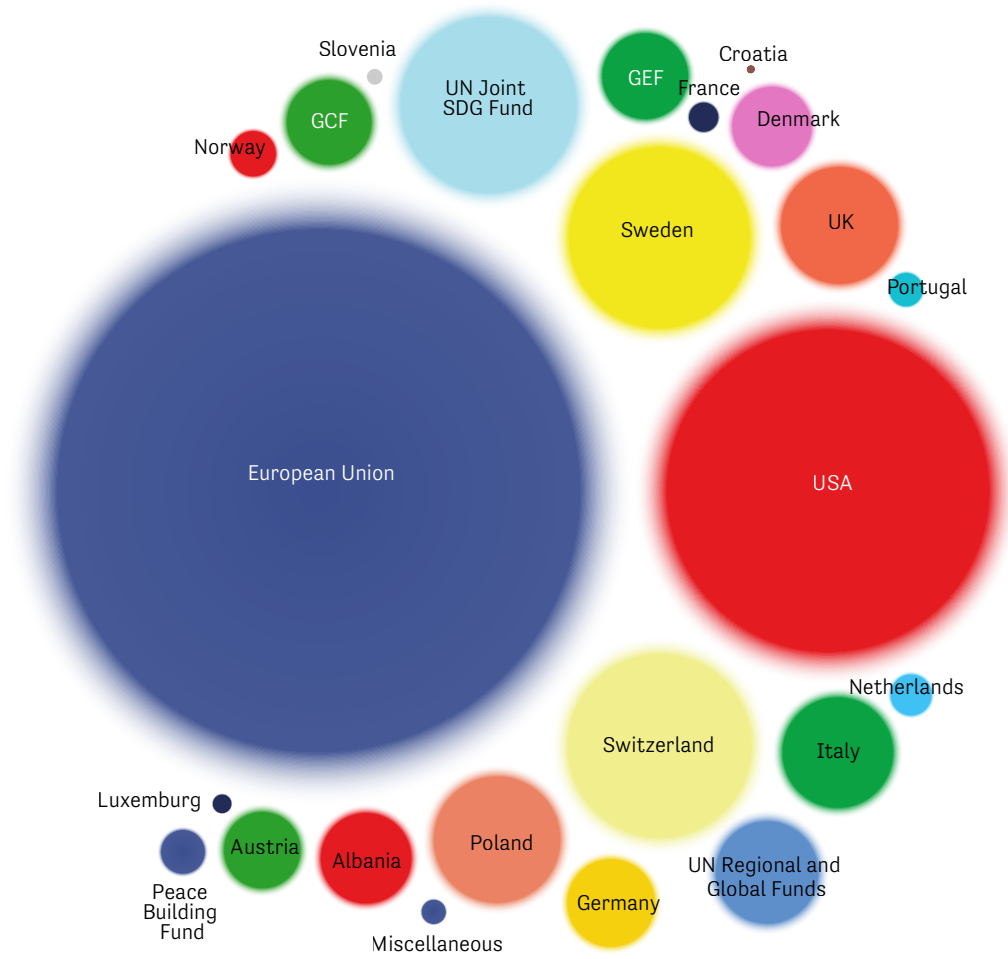
From 2007 to 2024, overall contributions from 16 partners to ASDG-AF reached almost \$80 million (Figure 4). By the end of 2024, seven joint projects

continued to be implemented with support from the Fund: three from phase I and four from phase II, ensuring strengthened UN coherence, coordination and collaboration.

The details of the joint projects’ main results for the year, focusing on significant highlights rather than providing an exhaustive list of results, are reported in Annex 1 of the present report.

The EU remains the strongest institutional partner of the UN system in Albania (Figure 5), while numerous other bilateral donors have supported the UN interventions with a total of \$63 million. The UN

Figure 5. Contributions of partners, 2024



in Albania raised in addition \$10.4 million of the UN’s core, pooled and thematic funds and \$2.7 million from global vertical funds such as the Adaptation Fund, Global Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Three years into the implementation of UNSDCF, the UNCT has significantly outperformed initial resource mobilization estimates. Of the projected \$282 million budget (funding gap of \$117 million), \$15.6 million in core resources have been secured (71% of the total estimated for 2022–2026) leaving a \$6.4 million gap for the remaining period. Non-core resources reached \$232 million, nearly doubling the estimated \$134 million, with

notable increases under all four outcomes, particularly for Outcome 3: Governance and Gender-Responsive Governance, which saw three- to four-fold growth. The progress reported above is attributed largely to increased contributions from key donors, including the EU, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, Italy, and the USA. The last of these was not anticipated initially but has emerged as a key funder, especially under Outcome 3.

With total, secured funding exceeding estimates by \$92 million, the funding gap has been reduced to \$26 million, positioning the UNCT to focus its resource mobilization efforts to closing the remaining shortfall over the next two years.

CHAPTER 3

UNCT KEY FOCUS
FOR 2025

In 2025, the UN will enter the fourth year of implementation of the UNSDCF 2022–2026. Planned activities for the year are outlined in the Joint Work Plans 2025, approved by the JEC and aligned with government priorities. UN agencies will direct attention, outstanding commitments and strategic plans as UNCT Albania starts formulating the new UNSDCF 2027–2031 in collaboration with the government and partners. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the current Cooperation Framework and an in-depth analysis of current and emerging trends that will be compiled into a CCA, both planned for mid-2025, will lay the basis for the UNCT to work with stakeholders to define priorities for 2027 and beyond.

The Summit of the Future in September 2024 culminated in the adoption of a Pact for the Future that includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations. In 2025, the UN will continue to leverage the outcomes of the Summit to create an enabling environment for accelerating progress on the SDGs. High-level and technical support will be provided to government SDG committees and the parliamentary SDG sub-committee to secure political commitment, ensure financing and enhance accountability. This effort will integrate the global agenda into Albania's national context. Additionally, financing dialogues with national stakeholders will be organized to design a financing strategy aligned with the Development Finance Assessment and INFF roadmap.

The UN will also prioritize the implementation of national commitments to accelerate SDGs from global initiatives such as food systems, digital connectivity, education, jobs, social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Furthermore, as part of its support for Albania's EU accession process, which serves as a critical accelerator for the SDGs, the UN will assist it in addressing benchmarks and gaps, engage with

the diaspora and support preparations for the country's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) submission and presentation at the 2026 high-level political forum (HLPF).

Aligned with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights and broader system-wide strategies, the UN will emphasize legislative compliance, capacity building and elimination of human rights disparities. The work will include efforts to combat GBV, empower youth as agents of change and address recommendations from the UPR Fourth Cycle. Continued collaboration on peacebuilding and reconciliation will build on the successes of the Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality & Trust project supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Collaboration with the UNCT Youth Advisory Group and Task Force will also intensify, involving the Minister of State for Youth and Children to advance the UN Youth Strategy 2030 and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. UNCT Albania's combined core and non-core resources for 2022–2024 have exceeded initial projections for that period and beyond (2022–2026) by \$92 million. Nevertheless, a funding gap (\$26 million) remains, alongside potential new gaps that may emerge. To address these challenges in a constrained donor environment, the UN will strategically implement its Resource Mobilization Strategy with an emphasis on leveraging the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund (ASDG-AF). This approach prioritizes mobilizing government contributions and aligning resources to support the government in advancing the National Reform Agenda, ensuring targeted investments in sustainable development and systemic reforms.

UN Albania will focus on harmonizing business practices and updating procurement and financial policies to align with UN regulations and international standards, enhancing transparency and efficiency. The OMT will expand green initiatives by exploring energy-saving opportunities, reducing resource consumption and promoting eco-friendly procurement to minimize its carbon footprint.

Annexes

ANNEX A

Albania SDG Acceleration Fund and associated joint programmes

Albania has been a Delivering-as-One country since the start of the pilot phase in 2007 and by 2021 had completed three One UN programme cycles. The year 2024 saw the third year of implementation of the fourth Government of Albania–United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2022–2026, as well as the closure of the original phase of the Albania UN Coherence/SDG Acceleration Fund.

ALBANIA UN COHERENCE FUND/SDG FUND (2007–2024)

The Coherence Fund was initiated on 24 October 2007 to support coherent resource mobilisation, allocation and disbursement of donor resources to the One UN Cooperation Framework. In response to the 2030 Agenda call for action to achieve the SDGs, the pooled fund was rebranded in 2019 to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, initially covering the period until 31 December 2021 and extended twice to allow closure of activities with an end date of 31 December 2024. The Fund advanced the 2030 Agenda by driving progress towards achievement of the SDGs while respecting human rights, promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and using similar crosscutting issues to multiply sustainable and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and social development.

ALBANIA SDG FUND PHASE II (2021–2027)

In 2021, phase II of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund was established to accompany UNSDCF 2022–2026 implementation, with a Memorandum of Understanding signed in July 2021. While phase II of the Fund was expected to come to operational closure on 31 December 2026, it was extended for another year in December 2023 to allow for implementation of the new Joint Programme Business Partnerships and Solutions for SDGs, which will continue to be operational beyond the original end date of 31 December 2026. The Joint Executive Committee,¹³ in its role as overseer of the overall contribution of the UN to Albania’s development via the One Programme, decides on specific allocations of resources from the

Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. The allocation decisions are based on the relevant priority activities, including respective budgets and implementation partners, set out in the cooperation frameworks and government strategies in place. On behalf of the UN in Albania, accountability lies with the UN RC for overall management of the Fund, with the RCO serving as Secretariat. It is administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office in UNDP in New York, as Administrative Agent. All actions of the UN in Albania are organised through four Outcome workplans, corresponding to the four Outcomes of the One Programme. Actions financed by the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, both Phase I and II, are included in these workplans, which are prepared jointly with the government counterparts and signed by the RC, and government Outcome Co-Chairs. Government has a critical role in the discussion of priorities, monitoring of progress and mid-course adjustment. The Albania SDG Acceleration Funds have been instrumental in enhancing the strategic alignment and concerted UN efforts towards SDG acceleration. Both phase I and phase II Funds have played a crucial role post-2019, especially in supporting post-earthquake recovery initiatives in areas such as education, social protection, gender, child protection, economic recovery and resilience, agriculture, DRR and community infrastructure, and generated increased interest from partners as a cost-effective vehicle.

From 2007 to 2024, overall contributions from 16 partners to the Fund reached almost \$80 million. In December 2023, the Standard Administrative Arrangement with Sweden was signed for a new contribution to phase II of the Fund, to be implemented in Albania by UNDP, ILO, UNIDO and FAO starting in 2024. By the end of 2024, seven joint projects continued to be implemented with support from the Funds, three from phase I and four from phase II, ensuring strengthened UN coherence, coordination and collaboration. The details of the joint projects’ main results for the year, focusing on significant highlights rather than providing an exhaustive list of results, are reported below.

SDG ACCELERATION FUND PHASE I KEY ACHIEVEMENTS, 2024

Earthquake response (Self-resilience of vulnerable communities affected is fostered and livelihoods

rebuilt through implementation of post-earthquake recovery measures, guided by Albania’s PDNA)

- **OUTCOME 1** HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT
- **OUTCOME 2** GREEN GROWTH, INNOVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- **OUTCOME 4** GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

The RC, RCO and UN agencies UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and FAO welcomed the Evaluation of the Earthquake Response efforts provided by the UN in Albania 2020–2024 conducted during the period May–mid July 2024 in line with the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021), United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016),¹⁴ including gender-related norms and standards, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria. All implementing UN agencies are UN SWAP reporting entities and the evaluation took into consideration the SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicators and scorecards, and incorporating feedback received from consultations with a wide range of stakeholders and the UN Agencies in Albania.

The evaluation concluded that the utilization of the ASDG-AF as a funding mechanism proved effective for the collective UN earthquake recovery response. It allowed each UN agency to present their interventions as part of a package that highlighted unique UN features, such as a strong human rights focus, GE and the ‘Build Back Better’ perspective, while retaining control and responsibility over their own projects. Meanwhile, for smaller projects the collective presentation likely enhanced their chances of securing funding, as they might have been too small to attract funding independently. The use of the Fund as a mechanism to address the diversity of needs arising from a natural disaster worked well in the case of Albania by making use of each UN agency’s strengths and specific added value, while also offering a modular and flexible package of interventions to the interested donors. The RC, RCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and FAO agreed with the evaluation’s conclusions and recommendations and formulated management responses to the recommendations. The evaluation findings will inform the development of the next Government of Albania–UNSDCF for the period 2027–2031.

EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE EFFORTS PROGRESS UPDATE FOR 2024

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE (ERR)

Under the ERR project impactful support in 2024 reached 27 small businesses in Lezhe through the In Motion Methodology. These businesses comprised the final cohort of the programme and focused on economic diversification and resilience building. Each business underwent a detailed diagnostic process to assess operational gaps, financial challenges and market potential. Consultants then developed personalized action plans and provided tailored technical assistance, training and hands-on support to address the challenges. Businesses received guidance on financial management, marketing strategies and productivity improvements. They were supported with grants to renovate or replace equipment and enhance their commercial image through professional branding services, logo development and promotional materials, designed to increase market visibility and customer engagement.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT (CIS)

The CIS project targeted the repair and reconstruction of three education facilities in Durres Municipality damaged by the earthquake of 26 November 2019. CIS supported efforts from other donors and GoA to mitigate the impacts caused by the earthquake. Project implementation was based on two important pillars: Build Back Better (BBB) and Build Back Together (BBT). The recovery process is seen as an opportunity to strengthen resilience by reducing inequality and the vulnerability of women and other groups. Project activities resulted in education facilities being repaired or reconstructed, with a strong emphasis on sustainability, inclusiveness, environmental protection and improvement of the quality of the education environment. CIS helped meet the targets of SDGs 4, 10 and 17. A key achievement for CIS in 2024 was the repair and reconstruction of three education facilities in Durres (Jusuf Hoti joint high school, Katund i Ri; Isuf Ferra kindergarten and gym, Shkozë and Zyber Sallaku 9-year school, Manëz), which now offer better services to 810

13. Co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and UN RC (and composed of members of government and the UNCT).

14. United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016, <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

pupils and children and 51 teachers, as well as the 48,500 community members. The intervention adopted the latest BBB approach, offering stronger and resilient education facilities for the affected communities and ensuring the highest standards through an increase in access for disabled students and children, as well as the following installations:

- a high-end electrical system with efficient lighting
- energy-efficient central heating and cooling systems
- closed-circuit television
- thermal insulation
- fire alarms and fire protection systems
- modern laboratories comprising 2 IT, 2 physics, 1 chemistry, 1 joint biology-chemistry labs.
- libraries and multifunctional rooms
- 1 indoor gym & 4 outdoor sports facilities
- 1 medical room, 1 psychological room, and 2 joint psychological–medical rooms.

Three intermediate place checks were carried out with the participation of 40 people from the community, teachers, students and local authorities. The meetings were conceptualised as ongoing dialogue with the communities so that they become ‘co-owners’ of the reconstruction process. The intervention also applied the BBT approach within each locality, working together with local governments, local education institutions and communities to design and implement recovery activities rapidly with a participatory approach and a transparent and accountable system. Nine inspections for Health and Safety Education (HSE) were held on construction sites to ensure all workers and specialists understood the HSE principles, methods and standards. Application of these principles were a particular focus for the CIS project, with contractors trained in EU standards at the workplace and supervision to ensure that the standards are implemented.

In 2024, attention was also paid to communication and the visibility of the CIS project, with results and impact of the intervention highlighted and transparency and timely information on progress provided. A myriad of communications channels and tools to raise awareness of CIS were utilized, including social media platforms (video stories, infographics, albums, picture stories), inauguration of the Zyber Sallaku 9-year school in June 2024 and press releases. Fifteen publications were released on various social media platforms and 13 on the national and online media.

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

The project ‘Strengthen capacities of the Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service (AFPRS)’ has been instrumental in enhancing the operational capabilities of several municipal fire protection and rescue services. The support aligns with SDGs 11 and 13 and focused on sustainable cities and communities, and climate action. The primary objective of the project is to modernize and enhance the AFPRS, to be achieved by strengthening the operational and human capabilities for improved prevention and response through targeted support to the service at the municipal level. The assistance benefits firefighter teams across 10 Albanian municipalities (Durres, Fier, Kamza, Kavaja, Kruja, Kurbin, Lezha, Pogradec, Shijak and Tirana), representing 45 per cent of the country’s population. The support is contributing to increased resilience and capacities of the targeted communities and territories to counter the effects of fires in urban areas, industries and forests, as well as other disasters and incidents.

Key results achieved include the following:

- Delivery of three fully equipped new fire trucks for the municipalities of Fier, Lezha and Pogradec and 30 complete sets of Personal Protective Equipment (helmet, jacket, trousers, fire hood, gloves, boots) for firefighters of Durres Municipality, resulting directly in substantial enhancement of their operational capabilities, enabling the municipal firefighters to respond effectively to emergencies.
- Installation of infrastructure is also progressing well, with the construction of a new fire station in Fier Municipality completed and handed over in August 2024. Construction of the fire station in Pogradec Municipality is under way and on track for completion by March 2025. Once operational, these two fire stations will significantly improve the safety and working conditions of the municipality’s firefighters and improve their response and response times for their communities.

DATA INFORMED AND INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TOWARDS SDG ACCELERATION

- **OUTCOME 2** GREEN GROWTH, INNOVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- **OUTCOME 3** GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2024, the Government of Albania (GoA) embarked upon integrating and mainstreaming Agenda 2030 with the NSDEI 2023–2030 and the National Statistics Programme. An Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs,¹⁵ chaired by the deputy prime minister and comprising development partners, civil society, academia and the private sector, as well as an inter-institutional group working for achievement of the SDGs, has been operational since May 2023. SASPAC is mandated to act as technical secretariat for the Committee and coordination of the implementation. Meanwhile, Parliament unanimously approved a resolution¹⁶ committing to the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. A subcommittee on Sustainable Development has been established within the Parliamentary Commission on Economy and Finance, while the SDGs are now integrated into the NSDEI 2030 and the National Statistics Programme.

In 2018, Albania presented its first VNR of the SDGs¹⁷ at the HLPF under the theme ‘Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies’.¹⁸ The Review, benefiting from sub-national and civil society consultations, highlighted progress made, particularly in the areas of judicial reform, public administration reform, intensification of the fight against corruption, increasing the fight against organised crime and ensuring the protection of human rights, including property rights. The national statistics office, INSTAT, prepared an annex to the Review. From the perspective of Leave No One Behind, the VNR noted that further progress was needed for social protection, inclusion of Roma and Balkan Egyptian communities, PwD, children, minorities and other excluded communities.¹⁹ The time has now come for Albania to prepare its second VNR on the SDGs. Initial preparations began in 2024 with a view of its presentation by government in 2026. The UN supported the government in the preparation of the SDG Roadmap 2024–2030, with a national expert collaborating with relevant government and non-governmental partners to i) produce an inception report identifying preliminary gaps and opportunities to contribute to SDG implementation, ii) identify SDG targets for 2030 in line with NSDEI 2030 and the national priorities and based on assessment of the

sector strategies, iii) map SDG implementation by government agencies and institutions and development partners, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders, iv) produce a roadmap on stages, measures and key actions taken by relevant institutions to achieve the SDG targets from 2024 to 2030, including an overview of the costing of the actions, activities and measures, v) provide technical support to the National Committee on SDGs and SASPAC to finalize and adopt the Roadmap for SDG implementation 2024–2030, and vi) provide an outline and initial input for Albania’s VNR on SDGs. The Development Finance Assessment completed in 2023 was launched in 2024, together with an accompanying SDG Investor Map that identified some key sectors with large development potential. Discussions continued with the national counterparts on the development of a sectoral INFF following delays due to ministerial changes. At the same time, support was provided to INSTAT with its participation in the UN Data Forum that took place during the last quarter of 2024.

In 2019, United Nations Association Albania (UNAA), in partnership with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, established the Albanian Youth Delegates to the UN Programme (UNYD), a mechanism that ensures the representation of the voices of Albanian youth in various UN forums through the selection, mentoring and involvement of two youth delegates. The RCO and UNCT endorsed and supported UNYD, acknowledging its value and impact. Furthermore, UNAA’s youth chapter, Blueprint, hosts around 45 young people who work together to promote UN values and the SDGs among Albanian youth. Two Albanian youth delegates participated in the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA79), following the successful partnership in 2020 that promoted the dialogue of UNGA75. UNAA and RCO joined efforts to raise awareness of the Summit of the Future among Albanian young people and capture some of their views. Some 200 young people were consulted through the U-Report platform on their priorities and insights into the Pact for the Future, while a team of youth delegates from Albania participated in the Summit of the Future in New York as part of the country’s official delegation. The following activities were organized to raise awareness of the Summit of the Future:

15. <https://www.un.org.al/news/inter-ministerial-committee-sdgs-established>

16. <https://www.un.org.al/news/members-albanian-parliament-commit-play-active-role-support-implementation-agenda-2030-and>

17. <http://www.un.org.al/publications/voluntary-national-review-sustainable-development-goals>

18. <http://www.un.org.al/news/albania-presents-voluntary-national-review-sustainable-development-goals-%E2%80%93-during-ecosoc-high>

19. <http://www.ambasadat.gov.al/united-nations/en/vice-prime-minister-mrs-senida-mesi-presents-voluntary-national-review-sustainable-development-goals>

1. **In collaboration with UNICEF Albania** two U-report surveys were prepared to reach out to Albanian youth. The first report, launched on 22 July, focused exclusively on questions on youth participation, and was completed by 192 respondents. Of these, 90 per cent supported the idea of establishing and operating an international fund (UN Youth Fund) to finance the meaningful participation of young people in UN forums. Moreover, 47 per cent of respondents supported a gender quota mechanism for such participation, and 92 per cent agreed that there should be more educational and training programmes for young people to improve their leadership and decision-making skills. The second survey, launched on 26 August, received 250 responses. Strengthening the justice institutions and rule of law was seen as the main intervention that would lead to better upholding and protection of human rights. Increasing the role of women and youth in peace processes was also identified as a major contributor to improving global peace and security, with youth unemployment identified as one of the most pressing issues.

2. **Three informative Instagram reels** were created by the Albanian UNYDs to inform their peers of the results of the survey and the Summit of the Future. Reels and posts were made during the Action Days and also shared the delegates' experiences. The three reels (including the UNYDs' speech) were viewed some 17,000 times, reaching 8,600 accounts, while 6,000 accounts were reached through other posts.

3. **A gender-balanced team of youth delegates** participated in-person in the Summit of the Future and at UNGA79, between 19 September and 5 October. The visit was supported by RCO, UNDP, UN Women and IOM, with some of the costs borne by the participants themselves. The UNYDs participated in the Summit Action Days, the general debate of the UNGA79 (at the request of the Albanian Mission to the UN), six side events and the first days of the Third Committee of UNGA79. The insights collected through the U-Report, together with the main points of Albania on Agenda Item 26b (Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family), fed the speech written and delivered by the UNYDs on behalf of Albania.

Upon their return the UNYDs briefed the UNCT, informed their peers on the Pact for the Future and engaged in moderating a UNCT event held in Tirana on UN Day. Implementation of the Pact and its monitoring will form one of the foundations of the mandate of the next UNYD. The involvement in the Summit and UNGA79 has contributed to a genuine meaningful participation of youth in discussions on issues that impact them.

SDG ACCELERATION FUND PHASE II KEY ACHIEVEMENTS, 2024

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND 2 (LNB2)

➤ **OUTCOME 1** HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

During the reporting period, no major changes were made to the intervention logic of the programme. Outcomes and outputs remain closely aligned with the national reforms and development goals and strategies of the government. In particular, the programme played a key role in supporting the implementation of the new Social Protection Strategy (2024–2030), which outlines clear and measurable objectives for social protection in Albania. At the output level, during its third year of implementation, the programme adapted to the priorities and needs of key partners (primarily the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, MoHSP, and the State Social Services) and worked closely with other development partners to avoid duplication and maximize resource efficiency. The programme intensified its efforts across three interlinked levels of intervention: empowering communities to demand the services they are entitled to, enhancing the capacities of local authorities to deliver these services, and supporting central government in the implementation and monitoring of social care reforms.

Under **Outcome 1**, thousands of women and men in rural and urban Albania were informed about their rights and entitlements and benefited from a range of integrated social services. These services included referrals to vocational training, employment opportunities, family counselling and awareness raising on health and healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health. The programme focused specifically on empowering women and disadvantaged groups. For example, some 700 vulnerable women

and girls participated in local participatory budgeting processes across five municipalities, while the capacities of CSOs to advocate for gender-responsive budgeting practices and monitor effectively social service delivery have been strengthened. A group of disability activists reached hundreds of individuals throughout the country to ensure their empowerment and participation in decision-making processes. The community of people with hearing impairments now has more opportunity to use sign language, and organizations representing PwD are better equipped to demand accountability from government partners and provide essential services to their members. Several initiatives and services targeted Roma communities, particularly women facing intersecting forms of discrimination due to their gender and ethnicity. Thanks to the Integrated Social Services Model, from June 2023 to July 2024 some 1,500 Roma families in four municipalities benefited from integrated social services. Additionally, some 200 women and girls from other parts of the country received support with information on entrepreneurship, access to public services and a non-formal adult education programme. The community-based healthcare model for disadvantaged communities was expanded, reaching about 800 individuals, half of whom are from Roma communities, through awareness-raising activities. The programme paid particular attention to the vulnerabilities of different generations within the groups, undertaking targeted interventions such as school enrolment support and recreational activities for children, dissemination of information, education and communication materials, services for youth (including those at risk of drug use or other risky behaviours) and the provision of social and health services for the elderly. Furthermore, LNB2 made significant progress in implementing the Community-Based Social Services Grants Scheme, with 22 municipalities receiving grants for 27 social service projects. These projects aim to establish new or expand existing community-based services, benefiting more than 4,110 individuals.

For **Outcome 2**, the programme continued to enhance the capacities of municipalities through training and mentoring of staff on various aspects of social care service delivery, including planning, costing and budgeting, service delivery, monitoring, quality control and gender mainstreaming. The programme promotes models such as the Needs-Based Register—a valuable tool for delivering social services

to the elderly—and the Family Integrated Social Services Delivery, which has been implemented in four municipalities. LNB2 also continued to consolidate the implementation of UPHV methodology, with approximately 21,000 home visits conducted, reaching 3,904 children. In parallel, the programme was involved actively in implementation of disability reforms at the local level, providing support to the Multidisciplinary Disability Assessment Commissions to assess the needs of PwD for mobility devices and conducting individual assessments for PwD in residential institutions. Additionally, the programme facilitated the exchange of experiences through regional cooperation on bio-psycho-social assessments as part of the disability reform. Networking opportunities for the staff of 16 LNB-supported community centres for PwD were also promoted.

At the **central and policy levels**, adoption of the new Social Protection Strategy (2024–2030) represents a significant achievement, the result of close collaboration between the implementing agencies and MoHSP. Other key developments in this area include supporting government in improving the regulatory framework of the Social Fund, preparing for the EU accession process in areas related to social inclusion and social protection, and building capacity for data-collection processes on social inclusion at both the central and local levels. The programme also contributed to increasing government and public administration accountability through various monitoring processes, including monitoring the National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Action Plan for Older Persons. A methodology for monitoring implementation of social service delivery standards by State Social Services was developed and is ready to be applied. Additionally, with LNB2 support, a national report on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was prepared, and a Parliamentary Group for Population and Development established to address issues related to reproductive health, fertility, population and demography. In the areas of childcare and health, the programme contributed to the de-institutionalization reform for children in residential care institutions, with a focus on those with disabilities. The programme is also supporting implementation of newly adopted standard protocols for monitoring child growth and development. Finally, the programme continues to promote inclusive education and enhance the capacity

of assistant teachers who are already supporting many children with disabilities across the country. The faculties of social sciences in Tirana, Elbasan and Shkodra are now better equipped with knowledge and tools for scientific research and internship programmes. The collaboration with the Tirana Faculty of Social Work is particularly strong, aimed at improving its curricula and ensuring the integration of gender equality principles in its academic programmes.

Concrete results include the following:

Under Outcome 1²⁰

- 40 community-based activists were empowered 500 PwD to participate in decision-making processes.
- An alternative report was developed to inform the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on implementation of the Convention.
- Psycho-social support was provided to 42 Roma women and girls at risk of GBV in Kamza and Kruja.
- Information, education and communication materials on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for PwD, the elderly and youth reached 1,000 individuals.
- CSO capacities in advocating for gender-responsive budgeting and monitoring social services were strengthened, with the PRISMA network influencing improvements in the Law on Public Procurement.
- The community-based healthcare model was expanded, enhancing the capacities of 320 healthcare providers and reaching 800 individuals, including over 400 from Roma communities.
- Nine organizations of PwD received grants to implement advocacy, capacity-building and service-access projects.
- 110 disadvantaged women and youth participated in participatory budgeting in Berat, Dimal, Fier, Shkodra and Tirana.
- Young key populations, including those in prison, were educated on SRHR, HIV/STIs and overdose prevention.
- Integrated social services were provided to 3,362 individuals (640 families) in Divjaka, Durrës, Lushnja and Tirana, including 1,155 Roma community members.
- Scholarship programme was promoted, preventing school drop-out and building the capacity of 60

professionals, reaching 3,200 individuals.

- Integrated services for the elderly were provided to 430 senior citizens in Vlora Day Care centre.
- New community service models were established, with the Patos centre fully reconstructed and Divjaka's under development.
- The first cohort of 12 Albanian Sign Language interpreters completed their training.

Under Outcome 2²¹

- The Community-Based Social Services Grants Scheme funded 27 projects in 22 municipalities, benefiting more than 4,110 individuals.
- 77 professionals from 15 community centres received training in sexuality education for children and youth with disabilities, while more than 80 employees were coached and mentored.
- Multidisciplinary Disability Assessment Commissions assessed mobility needs, providing 114 wheelchairs and 54 other assistive devices.
- Implementation of the bio-psycho-social assessments was further developed through regional cooperation, with 351 representatives participating in 12 forums to enhance coordination.
- UPHV methodology conducted 21,082 visits, reaching 3,904 children and identifying 116 at-risk cases.

Under Outcome 3²²

- The regulatory framework of the Social Fund was improved with approval of a Decision of the Council of Ministers on the calculation methodology and a revised Decision pending approval.
- Monitoring reports on the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were developed.
- Standard protocols on child growth are being implemented, with 122 health professionals trained in growth monitoring and screenings in four regions.
- Increased accountability in social service delivery, with State Social Services developing a methodology to monitor service delivery standards.
- De-institutionalization reform for children in residential care is progressing, with a needs assessment for 40

children with disabilities under way.

- Accountability for elderly rights was improved, with a progress report on the National Action Plan for Older Persons and a manual on Primary Health Care for Older Persons developed.
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-university Education enhanced its capacity to support assistant teachers, training 847 teachers and strengthening inclusive education in schools.
- Universities in Elbasan, Shkodra and Tirana improved scientific research and internship programmes with 27 student coaches and lecturers trained, and an international conference held in Tirana.
- The Faculty of Social Work developed new curricula for social work and psychology, integrating GE principles into their programmes, with 42 master's students empowered in equality, diversity and inclusion.
- The Order of Social Workers became fully operational, hosting the first National Forum of Social Workers with 200 participants.

CONTRIBUTION TO SDGS

Among the various development programmes, LNB2 has had the greatest positive impact on achievement of the SDGs in Albania, due to its broad focus on several areas covered by the SDGs and their targets. LNB2 is guided clearly by the SDG principle of LNB in the identification and active involvement of the left-behind communities who are the main beneficiaries, including women and men with low income and those from rural areas, PwD, Roma communities, the elderly, youths at risk and others.

Specific examples of the contribution of LNB2 to the SDGs during 2024 include the following:

- **SDG 1** – Poverty eradication (targets 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) and SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities, through activities that offer integrated social services and empower disadvantaged communities; adoption of inclusive social care planning at the central and local levels, such as the development of the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and local social care plans and improvement of the Social

Fund legislation.

- **SDG 3** – Good health and nutrition (targets 3.5, 3.7, 3.8), through support for implementation of UPHV taking a holistic approach for child health and development; implementation of the integrated health model, reaching out with information on health disadvantaged communities; provision of information and services to youth and other drug-users; information and services related to reproductive and sexual health; implementation of standard protocols on child growth and development monitoring.
- **SDG 4** – Quality Education (targets 4.1 and 4. B), through support to inclusive education, including reducing dropping out of students from schools and efforts to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- **SDG 5** – Gender equalities, through targeted and integrated interventions that ensure women and girls have equal access to services and participate actively in empowerment project activities. In addition, the programme greatly contributes to this goal by addressing issues of concern for women, e.g., maternal health, reproductive rights and access to healthcare through participatory budgeting and piloting of services.
- **SDG 10** – Reduced inequalities (target 10.2, 10.3), through activities that aim to empower and ensure equal access to services for PwD and by focusing on empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, regardless of gender.
- **SDG 17** – Partnership for the goals, through activities aiming at building a wide partnership with national and local level institutions, academia and CSOs towards advancing the agenda on social inclusion.

CHALLENGES

- There are limited coverage and inadequate inclusivity mechanisms and inefficient resource allocations. A key issue is the limited fiscal capacity of municipalities, which hampers their ability to sustainably finance and expand social services. Additionally, high staff turnover in social care

20. Vulnerable population requests and receives adequate gender-responsive social services from local authorities, aimed at increasing their social inclusion and minimizing vulnerability, and holds decision makers and service providers accountable for policy delivery.

21. Municipalities efficiently and effectively manage and scale up effective models of quality support and integrated community-based social services to boost social inclusion that are gender responsive and rights based and reflect internationally recognized standards.

22. National institutions efficiently and effectively implement their policy framework for ensuring social inclusion and adequately fund gender-responsive social services through improved policy monitoring and evaluation systems, updated quality professional standards and empowered citizens and sustainable financing mechanisms.

services undermines the retention of skills and knowledge gained from LNB's capacity-building efforts. To help address these challenges, the UN agencies have continued their support for central government in implementing and monitoring social care reforms, while also working to strengthen the capacities of local authorities to deliver social care services to those most in need.

- Despite the robust social inclusion policy framework adopted to promote the inclusion of marginalized communities, their members still face multiple challenges in fully accessing and benefiting from the support and services they are entitled to, including social protection. LNB's mitigation strategy emphasizes the meaningful involvement of diverse stakeholders, including authorities, civil society, vulnerable groups and international partners. By fostering collaboration through knowledge-sharing networks, communities of practice and capacity-building initiatives, UN agencies have facilitated the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. This approach not only strengthens partnerships but also enhances stakeholder ownership.

SDG4BUSINESS

➤ **OUTCOME 2** GREEN GROWTH, INNOVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SDG targets: 2.4, 7.2, 8.2, 8.3, 8.8, 9.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.8, 13.2, 17.6, 17.9, 17.11, 17.16, 17.17

Albania's private sector is a key driver of the nation's economic development. However, in 2024, the sector continues to face challenges in fully realizing its potential for fostering inclusive and sustainable growth. This gap has become increasingly critical as the country progresses toward EU accession, requiring alignment with EU standards. Recognizing the need for more sustainable business practices and an enabling policy environment, the UN Joint Project Business Partnerships & Solutions for SDGs (Business4SDGs) has implemented a multifaceted approach to support the private sector in transitioning towards sustainability. Implemented by UNDP, FAO, ILO and UNIDO, the project builds on the success of its first phase. Through a series of strategic activities, agencies have been working to equip companies with technical capacities to implement sustainable practices and contribute to local value

chains. The capacity-building efforts targeted local businesses in the agro-processing and textiles, clothing, leather and footwear (TCLF) sectors, providing them with tailored support to improve working conditions, remain competitive, adopt energy- and resource-efficient and circular business practices in alignment with EU standards, and improve overall business management (SDG 7, 9, 12).

For the TCLF sector, a call for applications was launched to identify businesses ready to adopt sustainable practices through the support of Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) and RECP methodologies. Furthermore, a refreshment workshop on the sector was organized for local consultants, where participants were provided with an in-depth overview of the current situation in Albania and best practices for capacity building. In parallel, a comprehensive mapping report on the sector in the country was drafted, providing valuable insights into its current state, challenges and opportunities to support sustainable development and enhance competitiveness. Growing with Your Business (GYB) methodology was implemented in the agro-processing sector in Lushnja, building on a successful pilot in 2023 in Berat. In 2024, 11 businesses specializing in olive oil, pickles, wine, medicinal plants, dairy, among others, were selected and are currently being supported. The methodology provides comprehensive support to micro- and small businesses, offering tailored technical assistance, infrastructure upgrades and personalized business consultancy. By integrating a sustainability curriculum, GYB contributes to improving operations, reducing costs, increasing revenues and enhancing the environmental and social footprint of beneficiary businesses (SDG 8, 12, 13). Starting from a thorough analysis of the Lushnja value chain, agencies collaborated to support it in its entirety, from farmers to agro-processing businesses. Meanwhile, a Sustainable Food Value Chain Analysis was implemented in the vegetables sub-sector in Lushnja in order to identify the agronomic and technical factors, value chain-, natural- and enabling environment-level dynamics, as well as sustainability factors that will shape the nature and scope of opportunities to promote SDG-compliant and upgraded business models. These business models were distilled and are set for translation into SDG demonstration farms, with related training and capacity-building activities utilizing the Farmer Field School methodology. In parallel, a targeted assessment of access to

finance for vegetable producers was undertaken and potential financial service providers were identified for collaboration. Preliminary direct and value-chain financing models were distilled to facilitate finance for adoption of the demonstrated business model upgrades. Collaboration among the agencies was crucial to these efforts, fostering a supportive environment that extended assistance from farmers to agro-processing businesses. This integrated approach not only aims to enhance local value chains but also aligns with broader goals of sustainability and economic resilience in the agricultural sector.

To boost the local enabling ecosystem, the work of UN agencies contributed to raising awareness among companies of the importance of sustainability and to strengthening their connections within both national and international business networks. A roadmap for internationalization was drafted for Albanian businesses in the Swedish market, identifying key stakeholders such as major importers and supermarkets. Informative materials were developed to facilitate connections, while engagement with the National Trade Board of Sweden initiatives laid the groundwork for future collaboration (SDG 8, 17). The second holding of the SDG Business Pioneers Award gathered 67 applications from companies of whom 15 received awards for their outstanding contributions to sustainability, assessed on criteria including environmental impact, sustainable operations and corporate social responsibility initiatives within Albanian territory. The initiative also engaged 13 students from Tirana University to design and produce trophies, fostering collaboration between academia and industry (SDG 9, 4, 12, 17). The event was further promoted by a communication campaign involving the winners from the previous edition, the publication of a booklet on sustainable practices dedicated to Albanian businesses and a dedicated website increasing the reach to the business community.

CHALLENGES

Engaging businesses in project activities posed a significant challenge, particularly given the limited awareness of the long-term benefits of sustainability among Albanian companies. Initially, many businesses were hesitant to participate, either due to a lack of familiarity with sustainable practices or scepticism of the tangible benefits of involvement. The project implemented outreach efforts including direct

communication through phone calls, emails and visits to premises to explain the value of the initiatives, and included collaboration with municipalities. Furthermore, for agricultural producers, the business model upgrades that will be implemented will undergo a structured economic, financial and sustainability assessment to build evidence and credibility around the double bottom-line impacts and to attract commercial finance for uptake.

Also **sustaining the engagement** and interest of participating businesses over time emerged as a challenge. Companies often face competing priorities, and the long-term nature of the project risked losing the focus and commitment of companies. Thus, personalized support through tailored consultations, regular check-ins and progress updates were conducted to keep businesses actively engaged with the project objectives and ensured ongoing value for businesses, addressing their specific needs and challenges. Furthermore, helping businesses **integrate sustainable practices into their established operations** poses a significant challenge, particularly for agricultural producers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with limited resources and rigid structures. For many, shifting to a sustainable model requires overcoming operational, financial and knowledge barriers. For agricultural producers, such challenges are compounded further as their operations and prospects are bound to and shaped by agricultural production cycles, as well as biological and environmental factors. However, collaboration with policymakers and industry stakeholders is proving crucial for the creation of an enabling environment, ensuring that businesses can more easily align with EU standards and requirements.

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALBANIA PHASE II

➤ **OUTCOME 4** GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

The UN JP EVAW II continues to support progress towards achieving SDG 5.2 in Albania, strengthening the prevention, response and policy environment around VAW. In its second year of implementation, there was a marked increase in the reporting of VAW cases through the national hotline, with a total of 4,658 calls, compared to 3,871 calls

in 2023. Positive developments took place in strengthening the set-up to address and combat the phenomenon with increased human resources through a newly established directorate in the ministry dedicated to preventing and addressing VAW, and new policies to address sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace in three municipalities (Berat, Malesi e Madhe and Skrapar). An increase in the number cases of VAW was reported through the REVALB system (775 in 2024; 621 in 2023). Femicide Watch, the first in the region, was established jointly with the Ombudsperson of Albania following the global United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women methodology for data collection, and the first report published in December 2024 highlighting the persistence of femicide cases. The report and the observatory are tools for promoting continuous accountability to address and respond to entrenched stereotypes and improve the prevention and response to all forms of VAW. Two municipalities (Elbasan and Lushnja) increased their budgets to deliver VAW services following dedicated analysis of the financial gap that existed for them to effectively address the phenomenon, with a total increase of ALL 2,500,000²³ in their budgets. Additional resources were raised by the UN JP through the Government of the United Kingdom, which allocated GBP 150,000 for outputs 1.2, on the engagement of men and boys, and 3.1, on enhancing coordination between institutional actors.

At least 19 CSOs strengthened their capacities to engage in EVAW-related policy processes, with 15 of 16 recommendations shared by the Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence with the Human Rights Council fully included in the UPR report for Albania. Almost 800 men and boys were involved in activities to raise awareness of GE, including through the strengthening of the ‘Be a Man’ clubs (increasing the number to 14), bootcamps for young students and dedicated workshops and sessions on positive fatherhood, as well as the annual ‘Men who Inspire’ conference. More than three million people were reached through social media, with great engagement, especially during the International Women’s Day and 16 Days campaigns, and more than 4,500 were directly engaged in in-person activities. In 2024, the JP experimented with innovative engagement methods including a joint bike ride across 16 cities in Albania that reached more than 400 people who were actively involved

in the relay and increased their awareness of VAW, their potential role to prevent and address such violence in their community and leverage sports as a catalyst for change. Other innovative awareness-raising initiatives included theatre plays, campaigns and podcasts on safety in public spaces and public transport, to name a few. Almost 1,250 members (including almost 400 men) – police officers, health professionals, municipal staff, education professionals, DV coordinators – of the CRM in 37 municipalities,²⁴ increased their capacities to address VAW. The network of DV coordinators and CRM member was further strengthened with dedicated meetings and convenings during the year. As part of these efforts, 256 police officers from 27 police stations received specialized training on implementing DV legislation, in collaboration with the Sector for Domestic Violence and Child Protection at the General Directorate of State Police. More than 1,300 people received direct assistance through the JP and its CSO partners, including 130 women from the Roma and Egyptian community, 389 women from rural areas and 100 women with disabilities. The assistance included psychological support, legal aid, information and door-to-door support. Meanwhile, 341 women and 220 of their children were assisted through socio-economic reintegration services including provision of food items, clothing, housing, legal and psychological support, assistance in seeking employment.

Strategic partnerships with traditional and non-traditional actors continued, leading to fruitful and positive results. Parliament was more strongly engaged in 2024 than previously with the initiative on addressing digital violence, with a dedicated analysis and assessment supported by the JP that will lead to legal amendments. Strong commitment of MoHSP, all target LGUs and CSO partners active in combating VAW was essential for achievement of these results. Twenty companies increased their awareness of the provisions and their obligations as part of ILO Convention 190 on ending violence and harassment in the workplace. At least 41 media professionals (2 men) increased their capacities and raised their awareness of the role of media in addressing stereotypes, and at least 10 media reports of journalists attending the media forums were focused on the reporting of VAW. Faith-based organizations in Elbasan, Pogradec and Vlora continued to enhance their

engagement in VAW, with dedicated sessions involving representatives from various faith groups.

CHALLENGES

Delays in institutional processes that included legal reforms in which the UN JP was strongly engaged meant some were initiated but not finally adopted, such as the Criminal Code, Gender Equality Law, and Digital Violence legal amendment process. The JP will continue advocacy and follow up with institutions to ensure that its suggestions are considered as these frameworks are finalized.

The capacities of public administration officials remain low (see GREVIO findings, CEDAW recommendations and feedback from partners) and UN JP continues to work closely with local partners to strengthen capacities of CRM to address cases of VAW. Based on initial assessment and discussion with CSOs offering free legal services, the judicial and territorial reform has impacted and delayed the legal processes as survivors cannot always be present to travel and may have additional travel costs to reach court. UN JP continues to support CSOs in providing support for legal aid and legal representation.

EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN TROPOJA REGION

➤ OUTCOME 2 GREEN GROWTH, INNOVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Albania’s chestnut production has faced significant decline in recent years due to infestation by the Asian chestnut gall wasp *Dryocosmus kuriphilus*, an exotic destructive pest that has severely damaged chestnut forests. The pest infestation, primarily affecting Tropoja, the richest chestnut area in Albania, has drastically reduced yields, threatening the livelihoods of small-scale producers who depend on chestnuts for their income. Without intervention, the pest puts at risk the sustainability of chestnut production and the economies of rural communities in Tropoja.

Within the scope of OCOP, FAO is supporting Albania with two projects: i) a technical cooperation project aiming to develop green, resilient and sustainable

chestnut value chains in Tropoja; and ii) in connection with the OCOP initiative, the project ‘Empowering local communities for economic development in Tropoja region’, earmarked to Outcome 2: Economic Growth, Innovation and Climate Change (SDG target 8.2). In 2024, FAO Albania carried out several activities as part of these two projects including a value chain assessment, a rapid assessment of chestnut health, capacity building exercises, workshops, a study visit to Turkey, a chestnut festival and the creation of a ‘Chestnut Route’.

These two projects (a technical cooperation project, and a UN JP) support three areas of work, as follows: Setting up of a biological control scheme: A specialized biological control laboratory has been established, and personnel trained in breeding *Torymus sinensis*, a natural enemy of the *D. kuriphilus*. The objective is to breed this insect in a controlled environment and then release it into areas affected by *D. kuriphilus*. Implementation of silvicultural activities in selected demonstration plots in Tropoja: Sustainable forest management practices have been used in two demonstration plots (in Markaj and Lekbibaj), including silvicultural operations such as sanitary pruning that target the control of Chestnut blight canker, a disease that is slowly spreading in the region.

Establishment of a cold storage unit: One such facility has been established at Chestnut Hill Agritourism serving as a demonstration of the kind of investment needed for the development of a sustainable chestnut value chain in the region. Through appropriate conservation of chestnuts, the cold storage unit extends the shelf life improving the possibilities for marketing the product locally and regionally. By preserving the quality of the chestnuts, the cold storage is expected to increase market value and reduce post-harvest losses, thereby benefiting local producers and boosting their income. This work is expected to expand in 2025 with additional support leveraged from the UK and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The project engaged local and international consultants to assess the presence of the biological control agent (*T. sinensis*) in the region for the proposed programme, thus avoiding the introduction of an exotic species. The insect was found in Tropoja, enabling the biological control programme. Two dedicated positions in Tropoja Municipality and one in the ministry were created and the personnel trained.

23. ALL 1,800,000 in Elbasan, and ALL 700,000 in Lushnja

24. UN Women: Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Kamza, Kruja, Lushnja, Tirana and Vlora (all 7 municipalities of the County); UNDP: Berat, Devoll, Dimal, Divjaka, Fier, Fushe Arrez, Gjirokastr, Has, Këlcyra, Kolonja, Korca, Kucova, Kukes, Leskovik, Lushnja, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq, Memaliaj, Patos, Permet, Pogradec, Polican, Puka, Roskovec, Skrapar, Tepelena, Tropoja, Vau i Dejës; UNFPA: Klos, Mat, Pogradec, Vora and Vlora.

ANNEX B

Cooperation Framework Indicators

OUTCOME 1. BY 2026 THERE IS INCREASED AND MORE EQUITABLE INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE, REMOVING BARRIERS AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE AT RISK OF EXCLUSION. ¹				
Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
% of total government spending on essential services as a proportion of total government spending (T) and GDP: i) education ii) health iii) social protection iv) adequate housing	i) T: 11.4; GDP: 3.3 ii) T: 10; GDP: 2.99 iii) T: 32.5; GDP: 9.5 iv) T: 1.8; GDP: 0.05	i)–iv) T & GDP greater than baseline value	INSTAT Ministry of Finance GoA Housing Department Global Health Expenditure Database (who.int)	2023: i) T: 11.4; GDP: 3.3 ii) T: 9; GDP: 3 iii) T: 32.6; GDP: 9.6 iv) T: 1.8; GDP: 0.05
Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio in pre-primary education (children 3–6 years), disaggregated by sex ² (SDG 4.2.2)	T: 79.9 M: 81.9 F: 77.9	Increase by 5pp	INSTAT	82.9 (M: 84.3; F: 81.5)
Average PISA score of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science, disaggregated by sex (SDG 4.1.1 ³ , proxy)	Reading: T: 405; M: 387; F: 425 Maths: T: 437; M: 435; F: 440 Science: T: 417; M: 409; F: 425	Reading: 410 Maths: 437 Science: 422	PISA, Albania	Reading: 358 Maths: 368 points compared Science: 376
Coverage of essential health services (UHC; SDG 3.8.1 ⁴); proportion of children <1 year old that received measles vaccine (SDG 3.2.1)	64% 94%	65–70% >95%	WHO–Global Health Observatory. GHO UHC report INSTAT MoHSP	UHC Service Coverage Index (2021): 64% Coverage with Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine (MMR) 1st dose: 83% (2023; data for 2024 will become available after April 2025)
Out-of-pocket expenditure as a % of total expenditure on health	44.5	35–40	WHO–GHO INSTAT MoHSP Global Health Expenditure Database (who.int)	51 (2022)
% of infants under 6 months exclusively fed with breast milk (SDG 2.2.1, 2.2.2.)	37	>40	INSTAT MoHSP (Demographic and Health Survey, DHS–MICS)	37 (DHS, 2017–2018)
Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women in the age group 15–19 years	14.2	11	INSTAT	12.1 (2021)
Country preparedness index & Operational readiness index to respond to pandemics ⁵ (SDG 3.8.1; 3.d.1) (Level 1, <=30%; Level 2, <=50%; Level 3, <=70%; Level 4, <=90%; Level 5, > 90%)	73%	75%	WHO– SPAR ⁶	95% (2023)

1. UN system contribution to ‘investment’ is two-fold: 1) strengthen the quality and coverage of essential social services, and 2) offer policy options for more effective and efficient social sector spending. Specific outputs and activities will address education and life skills, healthcare, social care and social protection, housing and livelihoods.

2. Data will be available at municipal level following Census 2023.

3. SDG 4.1.1. Proportion of children or young people a) in Grade 2/3, b) at the end of primary, and c) at the end of lower secondary, education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in i) reading and ii) mathematics, by sex.

4. SDG 3.8.1. Coverage of essential health services is defined as the average coverage of the 14 SDG 3.8.1 tracer interventions.

5. This indicator measures the level of preparedness and operational readiness based on implementation of International Health Regulations capacities.

6. WHO States Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting tool (SPAR) tool consists of 24 indicators for the 13 IHR capacities needed to detect, assess, notify, report and respond to public health risk and acute events of domestic and international concern.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
i) No. of households, ii) no. of PwD, and iii) % of refugees and persons granted temporary protection covered by social protection system (SDG 1.3.1)	i. 66,269 ii. 72,711 iii. 2.3	i. 65,000 ii. 70,000 iii.1.5	MoHSP UNHCR	i. 63,714 ii. 71,443 iii. 2.1, UNHCR
Socio-economic gaps between Roma (R) and non-Roma (NR), by sex (reflected in employment, registration and access to services; RF, Roma females)	<u>Employment</u> NR: 27%; R: 18%; RF:11% <u>Possession of ID</u> NR: 97%; R: 90%; RF:91% Youth (18–24) NEET NR: 42%; R: 78%; RF:90% <u>Use of preventive healthcare</u> NR: 68%; R: 44%; RF:49%	Gap decreased by at least 2%	Regional Roma Survey	No change from Baseline Survey will be conducted in 2025
No. of children in residential care at end of the year, per 100,000 population age 0–17 years, by sex	T: 96.6 M: 98.4 F: 94.6	T: 50 M: 51 F: 49	State Social Services INSTAT	Although there is a decrease in total no. of children in residential care, ratio has increased in respect of total no. This can have many explanations linked with decrease in birth, migration, etc.; values refer to 2023
No. of visits for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health at Public Healthcare (PHC) level	1,000,285 annually (15% of total visits to PHC)	Greater than baseline value	UNFPA reports	1,238,236 (INSTAT, 2023)
OUTPUT 1.1 SOCIAL PROTECTION. Social protection systems and mechanisms are strengthened to increase the coverage, quality and monitoring of cash benefits and social care services and affordable housing for vulnerable groups.				
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 1.1 No. of new or revised national social protection policies to extend coverage, enhance comprehensiveness and/or increase adequacy of benefits, with UN support ⁷	2022: 0	2024: 5	MoHSP Website, Reports UN Reports INSTAT MoHSP Website, Reports UN Reports INSTAT	NICEF: 3 UN Women: 2 UNDP: 2
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 1.4 No. of people accessing basic services, with UN support ⁸	2022: 36,364	2024: 48,653		46,301 UNDP: 24,440 UN Women 700 vulnerable women UNICEF: 25,000 UNHCR: 114, those assisted with cash assistance + accommodation
National government measurement of child poverty using multidimensional measures	Score 1 (none)	2024: Score 2		UNICEF, Score: 2 In 2024, INSTAT collected data on dedicated child module introduced by EUROSTAT as part of EU–SILC to measure poverty and deprivation of children
% of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings’ officials who report improved victim-centred approach in their unit attributable to activities under this outcome (IOM)	0	2024: 80		90
% of targeted childcare professionals, caregivers and relevant frontline workers in selected municipalities with improved knowledge and skills to provide alternative care (UNICEF)	0	2024: 80		80 Refers to social workforce of 5 targeted municipalities: Durres, Korca, Shkodra, Tirana, Vlora

7. UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women report on this indicator.

8. UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR and UNICEF report on this indicator: The baseline for 2022 is 36,364 reported from UNDP (13,750 vulnerable people with access to basic services and 21,914 vulnerable families with access to Social Housing Programmes), UNHCR (200), UN Women (500 vulnerable women and girls), and UNICEF.

OUTPUT 1.2 – EDUCATION. Education institutions have improved policy, digital knowledge, infrastructure, tools and budgets to offer inclusive learning and 21st century skills⁹ to boys and girls and especially vulnerable groups (all education levels and including in emergencies).

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
No. of students and teachers benefiting from better education services provided by repaired or reconstructed education facilities	7,400	2024: 22,500	UN and partners reports and PISA results	22,500
Coverage of schools providing CSE	70%	2024: 85%		85%
Scope and degree of digital learning ecosystems at primary and secondary level	2 initiating	2024: 3 established		3 established 4 of the 6 pillars of eco-system are working: digital platform, teacher skilling, Internet, digital content
Performance in PISA	Reading, 405 Maths, 437 Science, 417	PISA 2024–2025 Reading, 410 Maths, 457 Science, 422		Reading 358; Maths 368; Science 376 (OECD 2023) PISA survey is periodical and new, annual targeting & reporting are constrained
Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education	55%	60%		67% Simulated, based on latest UNESCO Institute for Statistics data; will be updated once data for 2024 are released in March 2025
Education infrastructure facilities repaired or reconstructed	63	2024: 63 2025: 67		66 completed
Tools (furniture, laboratories)	63 furnished 41 with laboratories	2024: 63 furnished		66 education facilities completed 107 laboratories established
IT laboratories	41 education facilities with IT laboratories	2024: 57 education facilities with laboratories		47 IT laboratories established
Digital knowledge (assessment of teachers' needs on IT and digital literacy and online training platform)	No	2024: Yes (100%)		Yes 600 teachers were trained in ICT and blended learning
No. of teachers benefiting from Media and Information Literacy capacity development activities in education facilities (UNESCO)	2022: 240	2024: 420 (additional 180) 2025: 600 (additional 180)		420

9. 21st century transversal skills (e.g. communication, teamwork and networking, critical thinking and problem solving, initiative and resilience) and deep skills in one or more trades: e.g., ICT, boilermakers, millwrights, welders. EC, Skills for Industry Strategy 2030, 2019. See also: ILO, Skill-up, Nov 2019; AES, What are 21st century skills, 2020.

OUTPUT 1.3 – HEALTHCARE. Health system has increased capacities to achieve SDG 3 and UHC targets, providing quality people-centred services¹⁰ at an affordable cost, including during emergencies, and improving the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 2.3 No. of governmental and non-governmental institutions having increased capacity to design, implement and fund policies preventing and reducing malnutrition and promoting healthy diets, with UN support ¹¹	2022: 0	2024: 3	UN project reports MoHSP and other institutions reports	3 Support provided to Institute of Public Health (IPH), Operator of Health Services and State Health Inspectorate for promotion of adequate Infant and Young Child Feeding and enforcement of Albanian Law on Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding
No. of healthcare institutions that have conducted self-assessment on compliance with approved Quality of Care Standards (WHO)	41 (11 hospitals and 30 PHC centres)	2024: 50 healthcare institutions 2026: 96 (16 hospitals and 80 PHC centres)		71 PHC centres; 2 municipality hospitals
No. of neonatal intensive care units applying or implementing quality standards for neonatal care	0	2024: 1 2026: 3		2 Durrës and Korça
% of health providers providing home visiting services with adequate skills to effectively engage with parents and promote nurturing care, gender socialization, early detection and intervention for children with developmental risks, delays or disabilities	0	2024: 35 2026: 70		38 T no.: 548 (cumulative over years) health personnel out of 1,448 delivering preventive Maternal and Child Health services in targeted municipalities
No. of regions with modelling of a non-obesogenic environment for children in place in schools	0	2024: 1 2026: 3		2 Tirana and Elbasan; same counties as reported in 2023
Contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods	4%	2023–2024: N/A (indicator measured only through DHS) 2026: increased by 30%		N/A (indicator measured only through DHS)
Unmet need for family planning for all women 15–49 years of age	12%	2023–2024: N/A (indicator measured only through DHS) 2026: 7%		N/A (indicator measured only through DHS)
% of people from most vulnerable and marginalised groups who do not use primary healthcare, though needing the services	30, women 76, Roma and Egyptian communities 58, poor individuals	2023–2024: N/A (indicator measured only through studies) 2026: Reduction by 10%		To be measured through future studies
No. of PHC centres that provide quality integrated sexual and reproductive health services accredited by the National Centre for Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions	3	2026: All PHC centres accredited		225
No. of women of age 25–65 covered with cervical cancer screening	15,000	2024: 15,000 2026: 19,500 annually		10,200

10. Health services include Sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, newborn, child and adolescent health, non-communicable diseases and mental health, infectious diseases, and nutrition and immunization services. Services also address access for PwD (e-health and telemedicine) and capacities to treat drug-use disorders in line with international standards. Additional support will support enhanced coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psycho-social and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance-use disorders.

11. UNICEF report on this indicator.

OUTPUT 1.4 – SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SYSTEMS FOR EFFECTIVE DISASTER AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE. Health and social protection systems have increased capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies and pandemics and to promote increased community resilience.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
No. of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control	1,900	2023: 100	UN agencies and government reports Handing over and acceptance certificates of MoHSP WHO/Europe Covid-19 vaccine programme monitor (shinyapps.io)	Indicator closed
Coordination mechanisms and teams on Minimum Initial Service Package implementation established at national and sub-national levels	1	2024: 3		1 (one)
No. of people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies	5,000 adults; 6,000 children	2024: 5,000 adults; 4,500 children		5,338 adults; 4,000 children
Infrastructure for disease prevention and control upgraded, Infectious Disease Clinic renovated and furnished, and masterplan for IPH developed	No	2022: Infectious disease hospital renovated; IPH masterplan developed; 14 imaging rooms in healthcare facilities equipped with testing & imaging equipment		Target achieved by end of 2022
Covid-19 vaccination coverage (complete regimen)	42% (2 doses)	2024: 70% medium priority groups (primary vaccination) 100% high priority groups (primary vaccination or revaccination) 100% sub-populations with special considerations (primary vaccination or revaccination)		Indicator closed

OUTPUT 1.5 – INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. Communities and CSOs enjoy greater capacities and working mechanisms to participate in planning, service delivery and monitoring to enhance the quality of services and improve access for vulnerable groups.

Socio-economic gaps between Roma (R) and non-Roma (NR), by sex (reflected in employment, registration and access to services)	<u>Employment</u> NR: 27%; R: 18%; RF: 11% <u>Possession of IDs</u> NR: 97%; R: 90%; RF: 91% Youth (18–24) NEET NR: 42%; R: 78%; RF: 90% <u>Use of preventive health care</u> NR: 68%; R: 44%; RF: 49%	2024: Gap decreased by at least 1%	Regional Roma Survey UN reports Government reports Group contract	Survey will take place during 2025
Enhanced organization of local communities (including vulnerable groups) to articulate their needs and fully benefit from socio-economic opportunities for reconstruction and recovery	NA	2024: 19 small projects (grants provided) to activists and NGOs on returnee reintegration		19 small projects (grants provided) to activists and NGOs on returnee’s reintegration
No. of farmers groups and/or community-supported agriculture	0	2022: 3		Indicator closed

OUTCOME 2. BY 2026, INNOVATIVE AND INTEGRATED POLICY SOLUTIONS ACCELERATE SUSTAINABLE, PRODUCTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENHANCING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION AND TRANSITION TO A GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMY.				
Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
Value of production per ha. of agricultural land (proxy, SDG 2.3.1)	USD 4,056.9	USD 4,868.28	FAO	USD 3,889 (2022, exchange rate, 114.94 ALL/USD; latest INSTAT data; 2023 data released in Q2 2024) ¹² Baseline set in 2021: exchange rate 109.95 ALL/USD
Labour force participation rates (%), by sex, age (SDG 8.5.2; 8.6.1) ¹³	T: 69.6; M: 77.6; F: 61.6 Young Professionals (YP) (15–24) ¹⁴ T: 3; M: 43; F: 30	T: 69.7; M: 77.7; F: 61.6 YP (15–24) T: 38; M: 44; F: 31	INSTAT	Annual Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022 T: 73.2; M: 80; 66.7 YP (15–24) T: 38.6; M: 43.6; F: 33.8 LFS Q4 2023 (Quarterly Indicators) T: 75.1; M: 81.8; F: 68.6 YP (15–24) T: 39.1; M: 44.3; 33.9
% of NEET youth (age 15–24 years), by sex (SDG 8.6.1)	T: 26; M: 26; F: 25	T: 21.4; M: 21; F: 22	INSTAT	T: 23.3; M: 21.4; F: 25.2
% of youth and adults with at least one ICT skill, by sex and age group (SDG 4.4.1)	T no.: 41; M: 22; F: 19 YP (15–24): 57% (M: 56%; F: 58%)	T no.: 45; M: 24; F: 21 YP (15–24): 60% (M: 59%; F: 61%)	INSTAT	N/A
% of informal employment in non-agricultural sectors, by sex (SDG 8.3.1)	T: 30; M: 36; F: 22	T: 27	LFS 2019 (INSTAT)	INSTAT, 2022 T: 28.2; M: 33.3; F: 21.1
Availability of enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change (based on energy efficiency and renewable energy source targets) (SDG 13.2.1)	NDC	Yes	GoA reports UN programme reports	Target already achieved
No. of new or amended laws, policies and regulations approved for environmental protection and sustainable green and blue growth ¹⁵ incorporating GE considerations and sex disaggregated data	3	9	GoA reports, strategies and legal framework UN programme reports	8
Degree of integrated water resources management ¹⁶ (SDG 6.5.1)	47 (0–100)	52	UN Water	47 (0–100) (2023)
% of country covered by protected areas and under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (SDG 15.1.2, proxy)	18.5	23	National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA), MoTE ¹⁷	23

12. Total land (2022), 2,875k ha; Agricultural land (2022), 686.4k ha; Agricultural land productivity, chain linked (ALL/ha) (2022), 447,011.

13. Labour force participation (choice or behaviour) is instrumental to moves in the overall employment rate (SDG 16.6.1).

14. For young persons, [ILOSTAT, modelled ILO estimate](#), January 2021.

15. In sectors water resources management, biodiversity conservation, air pollution, waste management, land management, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.

16. Integrated water resources management is lynchpin of sustainable development policy. Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support.

17. Protected areas comprise National Parks, 46%; Nature Managed Reserves, 29%; Land/maritime protected areas, 5%; Resource Reserves & Multiple Use Areas, 4%; Ramsar network of wetlands, 3%; Strict Nature Reserve/Scientific Reserves, 1%; Biosphere reserves, 1%.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
i) Availability of National DRR strategy and updated national emergency plan, and ii) % of municipalities with DRR strategies in line with Sendai Framework and incorporating gender equity and child rights considerations and sex disaggregated data ¹⁸ (SDG 11.b.1)	i) N ii) 1	i) Yes ii) 5	GoA reports UN programme reports	Yes National assessment for 6 types of risks and consolidated report developed: DRR strategy and Action Plan developed and in place; National Civil Emergency Plan, in final stages of approval Albania became part of EU Civil Protection Mechanism
No. of cities implementing green and smart action plans providing access to safe, healthy, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and PwD (SDG 11.7)	4: Durres, Korca, Tirana, Vlore	30	GoA reports UN programme reports	5: Diber, Durres, Korca, Tirana, Vlora
OUTPUT 2.1 – EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. Government institutions have increased capacities to strengthen policies and services that address the skills mismatch and increase labour force participation and decent work, especially for young people, vulnerable groups and the long-term unemployed.				
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 4.3 No. of people directly benefiting from improved access to skills and lifelong learning programmes, including for CSE, developed and implemented with UN support ¹⁹	2022: 17	2024: 9,010		UNHCR 39
No. of Employment Promotion Programmes (EPPs) designed and implemented for vulnerable groups	5	2024: 11 (2 new EPPs on Intensive Counselling and Upskilling) 2026: 9	Official Gazette and Annual Progress Reports Minister’s Orders published on National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification website Annual Progress Reports	9 (1 new EPP on Social Re-Integration of Vulnerable Jobseekers & Economic Aid Beneficiaries)
No. of Vocational Education Training (VET) providers accredited or in the process of accreditation	0	2024: 15 (5 additional) VET providers accredited		13 (10 accredited in 2023 + 3 additional VET providers going through accreditation in 2024)
% of refugees & asylum seekers who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	5	2024: 7		15
% of refugees & asylum seekers (working age) who are unemployed	71	2023: 55		59.7
No. of interventions targeting women and young people, with aim of improving their access to the labour market	0 (Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis conducted and ready for use to design interventions during 2022)	2024: 5 interventions (2 Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Elbasan and Kolonja and 3 capacity building interventions in Elbasan, Gramsh and Kolonja)		UN Women: 5 interventions (2 LAGs in Elbasan and Kolonja and 3 capacity building interventions in Elbasan, Gramsh and Kolonja) Registration of 1 LAG completed, with 1 more awaiting official letter from MoARD
Ethical recruitment standards enforced with Private Employment Agencies	No	2023: Yes		Indicator closed
No. of identified NEET youth with mapped needs and characteristics (profiles)	2023: UNDP & UNICEF: 130	2026: UNDP & UNICEF: 5,000 (cumulative)		560
No. of vulnerable NEET who participated in outreach measures delivered by local level YG partnerships, benefiting from EU support	2023: UNDP & UNICEF: 0	2026: UNDP & UNICEF: 1,500 (cumulative)		To be reported in 2026
No. of vulnerable NEET who participated in activation measures (pre and post placement) delivered by local level YG partnerships, benefiting from EU support	2023: UNDP & UNICEF: 0	2026: UNDP & UNICEF: 800 (cumulative)		To be reported in 2026

18. Minimum standards: UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, [Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines](#) (section 5.6).

19. UNDP and UNHCR report on this indicator. With Decision no. 646, dated 5.10.2022, the Council of Ministers approved a new programme that allows NAES to outsource training provision to private providers that offer short-term trainings courses, targeting employed and unemployed jobseekers.

OUTPUT 2.2 – SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMY TRANSITION. Economic policy measures and programmes are designed, piloted and tracked to promote sustainable, climate resilient, green and blue economic growth and women’s economic empowerment with focus on ‘building back better’.				
Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 9.2 No. of private sector entities (including micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, MSMEs) that innovated their business practices, by mainstreaming environmental, social or economic sustainability elements, with UN support ²⁰	2022: 63 businesses supported by In Motion and 7 businesses supported SDP 2023: 8 Growing with your Business	2024: 95 businesses supported (UNDP 50, UNOPS 45) 2025: 30 Growing with your Business (cumulative)	Official acceptance of sites, management plans, regular monitoring of grantees UN reports Government reports	85 (66 through UNOPS EU4Culture, 19 Growing with your Business (cumulative))
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 17.1 No. of policies developed or improved for the benefit of MSMEs with business sector input, and promulgated or implemented, with UN support ²¹	2022: 0	2024: 1		0
Output Indicator Framework – 17.4 Existence of a national SDG-financing strategy in country developed with UN support ²²	2022: No financing strategy in place	2024: 1 financing strategy approved		Development Finance Assessment published
No. of private sector entities exposed to SDG positive business practices	50	2022: 65		Indicator completed in Phase I of Business4SDGs
No. of private sector entities that demonstrate integration of European Standards and Guidelines principles and sustainable development into their business models	0	2022: 28		Indicator completed in Phase I of Business4SDGs
No. of local value chains engaged	2023: 1	2024: 2 (cumulative) 2025: 3 (cumulative)		2 (cumulative)
No. of business representatives trained	2023: 19	2024: 44 (cumulative) 2025: 66 (cumulative)		41
No. of companies engaged through enabling ecosystem activities	2023: 120	2024: 195 (cumulative) 2025: 270 (cumulative)		199
No. of sites fully rehabilitated and revitalized employing a ‘building back better approach’ and accessible to the public	0	2024: 18		18 (cumulative)
No. of interventions targeting women and young people, with the aim of improving their access to the labour market	1	2024: 2 interventions (rural women groups in Elbasan and Kolonja) UNOPS: At least 5 interventions of which 4 target women and 1 young people		5 interventions, of which 4 targeted women and 1 young people
No. of administrative acts prepared to strengthen producers and businesses competitiveness in domestic and export markets	0	2022: 0 2023: 10		Target achieved in 2023
% of companies, signatories of Women’s Empowerment Principles, actively engaged in advancing GE	2023: 25	2024: 25		UN Women: 42 (32 signatories)

20. UNDP reports on this indicator.
21. UNDP reports on this indicator.
22. UNDP and UNICEF report on this indicator.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
No. of reports on the nexus between climate change and GE in Albania (UN Women)	2024: 0	2025: 1 report		To be reported in 2025
No. of networks of women active on addressing climate change in Albania (UN Women)	2024: 0	2025: 1 network		To be reported in 2025
No. of technical guidelines developed per value chain	2024: 0	2025: 1		To be reported in 2025
Established SDG Demo Farms	2024: 0	2025: 1		To be reported in 2025
OUTPUT 2.3 – INNOVATION. Policies and programme measures are developed to promote digital economy, entrepreneurship and growth of competitive SMEs/SMAEs, and increased spending on R&D.				
UNCT Digital Development Country Profile for Albania	0	2023: 1	UNCT Albania Report	Target completed and submitted in 2023
Upgrade of existing Farmer Portal	2024: 1	2025: 1	FAO Report: First draft strategy and action plan for Digital Agricultural Strategy	1
Development of Digital Agricultural Strategy	0	2025: 0		To be reported in 2025
No. of policies, programmes or strategies aiming at boosting digital economy that specifically consider Women’s Economic Empowerment	0	2024: 0		Target achieved - Digital Innovation profile finalized and will be submitted this year
OUTPUT 2.4 – CLIMATE AND ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES²³. Planning and coordination mechanisms are strengthened for climate change adaptation and mitigation and enhanced environmental management, conservation and protection, ensuring integration of gender equality commitments.				
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 6.2 No. of trans-boundary water bodies in which cooperation and joint management is strengthened with UN support: a) river and lake basins, and b) aquifers ²⁴	2022: 2	2024: 3 (Drin, Mat, Vjosa)	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool score (UNDP & NAPA) Fourth National Communication finalized that is gender sensitive UN and government reports Site accomplished investments, studies & reports available from project office NAPA, MoTE (Protected areas comprise: National Parks, 46%; Nature Managed Reserves, 29%; Land or maritime protected areas, 5%; Resource Reserves or Multiple Use Areas, 4%; Ramsar network of wetlands, 3%; Strict Nature Reserves, Scientific Reserves, 1%; Biosphere reserves, 1%)	3 Sava River Basin, Dinaric Karst aquifer system, Drini River 2024: 3 a) river (Drin, Mat, Vjosa); b) 1 aquifer (Dinaric Karst aquifer)
Output Indicator Framework—7.3 No. of people who, with UN support: a) gained access to clean, affordable, and sustainable energy; and b) benefited from services from clean, affordable and sustainable energy ²⁵	2022: 150	2024: appr. 420		2,124
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 14.2 Level of implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas, with UN support ²⁶	2022: 3 Plan Adoption/Designation Divjaka–Karavasta National Park (2022): 27,866.95 ha. Narta–Vjosa Landscape Protected Area 2022: 39,342.46 ha. Karaburun–Sazan Marine Protected Area	2024: Divjaka–Karavasta National Park: T (2024): 27,866.95 ha. Narta–Vjosa Landscape PA: T (2024): 39,342.46 ha.		Proclaimed: Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) no. 155, dated 13.3.2023 Surface: 12,727 ha.
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 15.2 Area (ha.) of terrestrial and marine protected areas created or under improved management practices, supported by UN ²⁷	2022: 80,985 ha. (809.85 km2)	2024: 103,922 ha. (1,039.22 km2)		103,922 ha. (1,039.22 km2)

23. Including integrated water resources management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land and forest management.

24. UNDP and UNESCO report on this indicator.

25. UNDP reports on this indicator.

26. UNDP reports on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 3 Plan Adoption/Designation.

27. UNDP reports on this indicator.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
Fourth Communication to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Biennial Update Report (BUR) in place	Third National Communication No BUR	2024: 0		Target achieved
Strategic adaptation intervention options identified and organized by sector and location, based in the stocktaking report on updated climate vulnerability analysis	NAP Strategy detailing mid-and long-term Common Country Analysis (CCA) action plan not in place	2024: 8 municipalities develop Adaptation Action Plan - Draft Gender Action Plan developed under NAP Process - Draft Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan Developed - Five risk assessment reports for energy, transport, Tourism, Urban development and agriculture sector finalized and adaptation options identified and prioritized		8 pioneering local adaptation action plans (Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokaster, Kruja, Kukës, Permet, Vlora) are driving progress in climate planning and financing at local level, incorporating gender-sensitive strategies
OUTPUT 2.5 – DISASTER RISK REDUCTION. Policies, capacities and mechanisms are enhanced for effective disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response at all levels.				
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 13.3 Existence of a national DRR strategy adopted with UN support and implemented by government in line with the Sendai Framework for DRR ²⁸	2022: national risk assessment and DRR strategy completed	2024: 7 Pilot intervention at local and regional level of civil protection completed and all set of DRR strategic planning documents prepared and endorsed by authorities	Position paper with recommendations for gender mainstreaming in DRR frameworks NS and Action Plan on DRR Local DRR plans Revised Local Budgets Project documents Media campaign products and visibility records Physical monitoring Handover of documents Subnational INFORM risk index results published online Gender-responsive practical manual for strengthening resilience in local DRR produced and distributed to all 61 municipalities UNDP progress report	Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies for 6 municipalities (Divjaka, Fier, Lushnja, Mallakaster, Patos, Roskovec) of Fier County are finalized, successfully passed public consultation phase, and approved by respective municipal council Local Civil Emergency Plans for Fier County and its 6 municipalities prepared, endorsed and final approval process of respective municipal council
No. of institutions with strengthened capacities to improve provision of essential services, goods and resources for women during and in post-emergency situations	0	2024: 0		Indicator closed
No. of households restoring agricultural production and dependent livelihoods	50	2024: 0		Indicator closed
No. of cultural heritage sites retrofitted to withstand disaster shocks	0	2024: 15 (cumulative)		14 (cumulative)
No. of Disaster Risk Management plans prepared for cultural heritage sites	0	2024: 10 (no. of sites revised)		10 cumulative
No. of municipalities provided with firefighting equipment or facilities	0	2024: 4 (Fier, Lezha, Pogradec, Durrës)		4 Fier, Lezha, Pogradec, Durrës) 3 fire trucks handed over to Lezha and Fier FPRS New fire station handed over to Fier Municipality 50 sets of Personal Protective Equipment handed to Durrës FPRS
INFORM risk index calculated	0 municipalities, 12 regions	2024: 61 municipalities (in 12 counties)		Calculated for all 61 municipalities in 12 counties According to INFORM Risk Index 2025, Albania’s score is 3.2 (medium), 3rd in Europe; 99th in world (191 states)
OUTPUT 2.6 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES. Capacities of urban municipalities are increased to implement sustainable development policies and programmes.				
No. studies that screen legislation and capacities on unfunded mandates at the local level	N/A	3 studies	Internal documentation, publications	1 study published ²⁹

28. UNDP reports on this indicator. DRR strategy in final stage of approval.

29. [ECE HBP 226_CPAIbania_E.pdf](#)

OUTCOME 3. BY 2026, GOVERNANCE IS MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE, ENABLING PEOPLE (WOMEN AND GIRLS, MEN AND BOYS, AND PERSONS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION), TO ENJOY QUALITY, INCLUSIVE SERVICES, ENHANCED RULE OF LAW AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN LINE WITH ALBANIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021. Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-Dec 2024)
Proportion of population who believe institutional transparency and accountability are satisfactory, by sex, age, disability and population group (disaggregated by central and local level) (SDG 16.6.1, proxy)	Central: T: 35%; A: 35% Local: T: 37%; A: 37%	Central: T: 50%; A: 60% Local: T: 50%; A: 60%	Trust in Governance annual survey (UNDP)	Central: T: 38%; A: 33.6% Local: T: 36.3%, A: 36.4%
Proportion of population who believe there are sufficient opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of public institutions (disaggregated by sex, age group, central and local level) (SDG 16.7.2, proxy)	Central: 28% Local: 39%	Central: 40% Local: 50%	Trust in Governance annual survey (UNDP)	Central: 27.3% (F: 26%, M: 29%) Local: 36.9% (F: 35%, 39%)
Level of implementation of accepted recommendations from UPR and human-rights treaty bodies (rating, 4-point scale: 4, fully implemented; 3, partially; 2, inadequately; 1, not or poorly implemented)	3, Partially implemented	4, Fully implemented	NHRI reports UN reports	All CEDAW and CRC Concluding Observations (COs) accepted by GoA. With UN Women and UNICEF support National Action Plans developed in 2024 to respond to these COs. Level of implementation will be assessed in the coming years.
No. of human rights complaints registered, by sex (note: effectiveness of remedial action assessed by routine annual programming monitoring with NHRI) ³⁰	T: 1,384 M: 919; F: 338 M&F: 127	(2022) 10% increase annually; reported improvement in remedial actions	INSTAT; NHRI reports UN reports	2023: T: 1,619 M: 511; F: 195 M & F: 139
Rate of (pre-trial) detention for children (per 100,000 population of age 14–17, disaggregated by sex) (SDG 16.3.2)	T: 12.3 M: 24; F: 0	T: 8	INSTAT; General Department of Prisons, Ministry of Justice	T: 4.4; M: 8.4; F: 0 Steady improvement of indicator every year and in comparison to baseline
Extent to which laws, policies and practices relating to migrants, refugees, stateless persons are consistent or aligned with international standards (SDG 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.4.1) (rating, 4-point scale: 4, fully aligned; 3, partially; 2, inadequately; 1, not or poorly aligned)	Migrants: Partial Refugees: Partial Stateless persons: Partial	100% approximation of Albanian migration legislation and policy with EU legal framework and international law and standards	GoA reports IOM reports UNHCR reports	Migrants: Partial Refugees: 67% Stateless persons: 67%
Extent to which measures of Action Plan of the National Strategy on Migration 2024–2030 are implemented	20%	100%	GoA periodic reports on implementation of NSM	No periodic reports on status of implementation
Existence of an approved comprehensive migration policy	No	Yes	DCM on approval of new policy	No To be approved in first quarter of 2024
World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law index , Civil Justice Sub-factor: 7.2 Civil justice is free of discrimination	0.51	0.56 (Regional; Global avg.)	WJP Rule of Law index	0.54 Indicator has improved since baseline; Albania is above regional average of 0.45, but still below global average of 0.56 for this sub-factor
Proportion of seized assets used for public social purposes ³¹ (SDG 16.4, proxy)	4 properties confiscated for social use	+12%	GoA reports	

30. Ombudsman, People's Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination.

31. Pursuant to article 37 of Law no. 10 192 (2009) 'On the prevention and crackdown on organized crime, trafficking and corruption through preventive measures against property', seized or confiscated assets are to be re-directed toward social services and projects (e.g., centres for rehabilitation of victims of organized crime, violence, trafficking).

OUTPUT 3.1 – ACCESS TO JUSTICE. Law enforcement and justice institutions have improved capacities, structures, tools and evidence to address gaps in legislation and strengthen justice system performance in line with international and national standards.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021. Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-Dec 2024)
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 16.6 No. of people who have access to justice, with UN support ³²	2022: 2,608	2024: 2,550 (UNDP: 2,200, UNICEF: 50, UNHCR: 300, UN Women: 0)	Ministry of Justice annual report UN programme reports National Labour Council or tripartite meeting report Monthly statistical report Albanian State Police data Project reports	4,898 3,565 people (2,472 people benefitted from FLA Centres and 1,093 people benefitted from CSO e-legal aid services) (UNDP) 460 people accessed legal aid through UN Women support 310 people at risk of statelessness assisted in 2024 (UNHCR) 563 children in contact with the law (110 girls and 453 boys) (UNICEF)
No. of Free Legal Aid centres established to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice to the most vulnerable women and men	8	2023: 12		Indicator closed
No. of justice professionals that have been trained in dealing with a) child offenders, b) child victims of crime	50	2024: At least 40 (additional; sex disaggregated)		286 professionals (122 F; 164 M)
Existence of specialized justice for children systems, such as capacity building and standards setting within criminal and civil justice systems	3 of 6 criteria met	2022: 2 of 6 criteria met 2024: 4 of 6 criteria met		4 out of 6 criteria met Criteria: i) Criminal Code, ii) Law on Legal Aid Guaranteed by the State, Child Rights and Protection Law and Criminal Justice for Children Code (CJCC), iii) and iv) 286 professionals trained, v) CJCC and pilots in 2 municipalities
No. of justice professionals trained in GB–VAW issues	60	2024: 30 (sex disaggregated)		250 police forces trained in child-friendly, victim-centred and trauma-informed forensic interview, including GBV component
Tripartite policy recommendation and roadmap on enhancing access to justice for all workers prepared and adopted by tripartite constituents	No strategy or roadmap in place	2023: Tripartite policy recommendation and roadmap adopted		Indicator closed
Proportion of PoC (for statelessness) enrolled in National Social Registries	29%	2024: 11%		14% (UNHCR)
Rate of standard-compliant Albanian State Police arms and ammunition storages vs. total	48%	2024: 75%		65% are compliant with standards (11 from SEESAC or state budget and 10 from UNDP)

32. UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and UN Women report on this indicator.

OUTPUT 3.2 – GOOD GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION AND VOICE. Integrated multi-sector mechanisms will be created and strengthened to support dialogue and strengthen policy formulation, based on good governance principles. (Cooperation efforts will promote inclusion and build higher levels of trust in society, and enable rights holders, especially from excluded groups, to have greater access to information and services (including FLA), enabling them to voice their concerns, claim their rights in legal processes and seek remedies for violations.)

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021. Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-Dec 2024)
No. of local governments with more efficient and transparent system of funding of CSOs from public sources	12	2024: 18	Formal agreements or MoU and contracts between local governments and CSOs participating as Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance beneficiaries Action field monitoring reports CSO reports for implementation of projects indicating beneficiaries, statistics and data from beneficiary CSOs UN project reports and publications	18
No. of women and men receiving benefits and support from CSOs supported by the action	28,000	2024: 33,500		33,500
No. of CSOs promoting youth engagement in local policymaking	2021: 0	2022: 10		Indicator closed Part of 1st phase of Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and closed in May 2024
No. of new partnerships between youth and other stakeholders in advocating for positive social change	2021: 0	2024: UNICEF 5 (10 cumulative)		5
No. of young people (disaggregated by gender) in target group who indicate to have acquired new skills to effectively address hate speech	0	2024: 750 (cumulative)		1,636 (969 girls, 667 boys, of which 70 Roma) 503 young people (341 girls, 162 boys) 100 young people representatives of Local Youth Councils (45 F, 55 M) 100 young people from bootcamps (51 F, 49 M) 690 young journalists (408 F, 282 M) 63 young athletes with or without intellectual disabilities from Special Olympics (27 F, 36 M) 130 Young People at local level (80 F, 53 M), of which 70 Roma & Egyptian (in collaboration with National Youth Agency) 50 young fans in collaboration with Albanian Sport Science Association (18 F and 32 M)
No. of youth engaged in activities that address toxic masculinities, GBV, social cohesion challenges that post positive stories on social media	0	2024: 50		140 young people

OUTPUT 3.3 – DATA AND EVIDENCE. Cooperation Framework partners have increased capacities to generate quality disaggregated data to strengthen policies and programmes.				
Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021. Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-Dec 2024)
MICS implemented	No	2024: Survey modules defined	UN agencies annual reports INSTAT publications	MICS data gap assessment endorsed by government, governance mechanisms for MICS established, package of modules agreed
No. of data producers and users with strengthened capacities in the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics	15	2024: UN Women: 115 (30 policymakers, 20 data providers, 20 data users, 15 data producers, 30 data users/local level)		121 (110 F, 11 M)
National profiles developed and published annually to inform national priorities on i) GE, ii) children, adolescents and young people’s wellbeing, and iii) older persons	Yes	2024: Yes (UNICEF/FAO)		None on GEWE (profile will be final in 2025) ³³
Report on implementation of Agenda 2030 indicators completed (culture 2030 indicators)	0	2024: 0		Indicator completed
No. of data collection tools on agri-food sector for improved SDG monitoring	0	2024: 0		Indicator completed
Availability of data and information on labour migration to inform policy development	No	2024: 1 (National Strategy on Migration 2024–2030 and Action Plan)		Yes
No. of in-depth analyses based on Census 2022 for vulnerable groups prepared	N/A	2024: Plan on thematic publications agreed		Census 2023 rebasing completed
OUTPUT 3.4 – PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY SERVICES. Institutions at national and municipal level have enhanced capacities and ‘open government’ mechanisms to deliver quality services, promote consultation and participation, carry out integrity planning, fight corruption and organized crime, and strengthen participation of civil society and citizens, in line with good governance principles, the Open Government Partnership and international standards.				
No. of municipalities adopting integrity plans as a corruption prevention tool	6	2024: Likely further increase not due to direct UNDP support	STAR3 Project Reports, Municipalities Reports, Trust in Governance annual opinion poll (UNDP), Reports from Container Control Programme (CCP) Coordinator, National statistics Annual report from UN agencies and relevant institutions	28 (UNDP followed supporting sustainability of Integrity Planning practice until June 2024 building capacities at central and local levels to take over and advance Integrity Planning)
No. of administrative units operating One-Stop Shops for service delivery	15	2024: 15 (cumulative) Target changed due to changes in government priorities during 2022 and new vision related to digital transformation of services		Not relevant since May 2022 with decision to provide services on-line UNDP focus shifted in support of GoA new vision of Digital Transformation of services at local level
No. of STAR3 municipalities applying planning and reporting cycle of public consultations	0	2024: N/A (Consultation platform will not be further supported, because, as per new government vision, this aspect might be centralized under unique integrated central–local government platform)		22 Consultation platform continues, and 15 additional municipalities have started using it in absence of platform for consultations at the local level
Proportion of women and men aware of e-Albania portal	69.1%	2024: 95%		90.7%. No follow up since last year
No. of multi-disciplinary practitioners with increased knowledge, understanding and capacity to use relevant national and regional tools for conduct effective victim-centred and trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions of Trafficking in Persons	0	2024: 50		89 practitioners participated in 9 national and regional events in 2024
CCP Unit officials trained to detect illicit goods from examined containers, based on profiling and risk assessment (subject to availability of resources)	2 trainings	2024: At least 3 trainings per year (subject to availability of resources)		No training conducted, but 1 mission conducted to monitor operation of existing inter-agency unit, assess feasibility of new and plan training for units in 2027, at Kukes and Tirana international airports
No. of asset recovery knowledge products developed	0	2024: 4		Compendium of good practices in anti-corruption education in Western Balkans

33. [Statistical dashboard 4 children](#), updated.

OUTPUT 3.5 – ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. Parliament, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and CSOs have strengthened capacities and mechanisms to assess the implementation of human rights and gender equality legislation, policies and strategies and to promote and protect the realisation of Albania’s human rights and gender equality commitments.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021. Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-Dec 2024)
No. of public hearings organized by Parliament with public institutions and other stakeholders on child and adolescent rights	2	2026: 3 annually	Parliament website, Annual NHRI reports, CRC and UPR recommendations, EU Albania Reports	0
No. of complaints brought by children to independent human rights mechanisms during the year	1	2024: 30 2026: 40		50 UNICEF: 50 (figure reported from People’s Advocate) UNHCR: 0

OUTPUT 3.6 – MIGRATION AND ASYLUM. Government has increased capacities to i) Strengthen policies and legislation for effective migration and asylum governance, ii) Enhance the management of mixed movements of refugees and migrants including reception and identification of persons with special needs, ii) Offer effective protection for unaccompanied, separated foreign children, minors and women, and iv) Strengthen mechanisms for diaspora engagement.

Output Indicator Framework – SDG 10.3

No. of people internally displaced, migrants, refugees or part of host communities, or communities left or affected populations benefiting from integrated and targeted interventions, including on strengthening social cohesion, with UN support ³⁴	2022: 8,913	2024: 10,100		10,107 (UNICEF: 4,500) (UNHCR: 1,388) (IOM: 4219)
Existence of coordination and monitoring system in place and functioning	No	2024: Yes	UN project reports DCM on policy approval Department of Border and Migration, Albanian State Police reports UN project reports DCM on policy approval Department of Border and Migration Albanian State Police reports	Yes
Border management and readmission frameworks aligned with international standards	No	2024: Yes		Yes
Proportion of refugees and migrants arriving as part of mixed movements who are referred to the asylum procedures	0.8%	2024: 20%		6%
Proportion of individuals undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal advice or representation	100%	2024: 100%		100%
Existence of an approved comprehensive migration policy	No	2024: Yes		Yes In May 2024, government adopted National Strategy on Migration (2024–2030) and its Action Plan (2024–2026)

34. UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women report on this indicator.

OUTCOME 4. BY 2026, GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENS EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION, PROMOTES WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND REDUCES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN.				
Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
Rate of child victims of criminal offences, per 100,000 child population (0–17 years), last 12 months	T: 203.1 F: 106.9 M: 294.8	20% decrease	INSTAT Ministry of Interior	2023: 289.4 (absolute value of 1,447 compared to 1,057 for year 2022)
Proportion of children 1–14 years who experienced any physical punishment or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month, disaggregated by sex and age group (SDG 16.2.1)	Total: 47.5% 2–4 years: 43% 5–9 years: 51% 10–14 years: 46% Male: 49% Female: 45%	30 pp decrease	INSTAT (DHS/MICS)	Data will be available after MICS is implemented and data processed in 2026
Proportion of women of age 18–74 years subjected to i) intimate partner DV, ii) non-partner violence, and iii) sexual harassment, in the previous 12 months (SDG 5.2.1; 5.2.2)	i) 33.7% ii) 2.4% iii) 8.5%	i) 32% ii) 2% iii) 8%	INSTAT	No change in 2024
Proportion of women of age 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (SDG 5.3.1)	1.4% (under 15) 11.8% (under 18)	1% (under 15) 11% (under 18)	INSTAT (DHS/MICS)	New figures will be available after secondary analysis of Census 2023 data (subject to analysis done by INSTAT)
Existence of systems to track and make public allocations for GEWE (SDG 5.c.1) ³⁵	Approaches requirement	Meets requirement	GoA reports UN reports ³⁶	Yes
Proportion of seats held by women in Parliament and local government (SDG 5.5.1) and national dialogue mechanisms	29.5%	>32%	INSTAT	Data for local government following 2023 elections: 42%
OUTPUT 4.1 – END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN. Government institutions at central and local levels and CSOs service providers have increased capacities to prevent and respond to all forms of violence and exploitation against women and children, with focus on vulnerable groups and multidisciplinary, specialized services for the rehabilitation of children suffering sexual abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, and mental health challenges.				
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 5.1				
No. of laws and regulations based on international human rights norms and standards developed with UN support a) to elimination of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices, and b) promote equal access to SRH care, information and education ³⁷	2022: 10	2024: UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA: 1 (Criminal code)	Parliament website Council of Ministers website UN and Government reports and websites REVALB State Agency of Child Rights and Protection	No new law on EVAW developed and finalized this year
No. of DV cases addressed through CRMs	994	2024: UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA: 550		775 Data from REVALB
No. of child victims of violence registered by child or social welfare authorities during the year	1,020	2024: 1,300		2,163 Data for 2023, since full reporting of 2024 not available from State Agency for Child Rights and Protection
No. of institutions with strengthened capacities to improve the provision of essential services, goods and resources for women	17	2024: 30 Total no. of UN JP EVAW		39 municipalities with strengthened CRM to address VAW cases

35. Methodology for measuring progress against indicator 5.c.1 <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-0c-01.pdf>

36. <https://data.unwomen.org/country/albania>

37. UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA report on this indicator.

OUTPUT 4.2 – ADDRESSING GENDER STEREOTYPES AND HARMFUL NORMS AND PRACTICES. Influential leaders, communities, families, men and boys, women and girls have improved knowledge and capacities to address harmful norms, stereotypes, and behaviours that drive gender discrimination, violence against women and children, and child marriage.				
Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
No. of knowledge products by youth articulating the linkages between masculinities, GBV and social cohesion challenges in the region	1	2024: 0	PBF Project monitoring activities UN Report	1 research into GE and sports in Albania 1 National Survey (perceptions on why men and boys do not engage in GE) 1 Survey on teenage pregnancies
No. of new media platforms and social media actors producing articles and reports on cross-related issues of gender norms and social cohesion challenges	1	2024: 2 media platform and 5 videos (UN Women)		9 influencers, 1 video from North Macedonia on Youth, Peace and Security Agenda; 1 TV show on gender and sports; 5 online media outlets published the IMAGINE campaign impact stories (Anabel in Albania, Nacionale in Kosovo, Danas in Serbia, Mia. MK in NM and Radio Sarajevo in BiH)
No. of actions that raise awareness on rural women’s roles and rights in agriculture and rural economy	5 nationwide campaigns to disseminate information on rural women’s rights	2024: 1 campaign		UN Women: 1 awareness-raising action
No. of rural women and men informed through awareness raising and trainings	700	2024: 2,000		UN Women: 33 rural women participated in trainings
No. of legal acts and policy documents addressing child marriage as a harmful practice	4 (Family Code and Criminal Code, Gender Equality Strategy and Agenda for Child Rights)	2024: 3 2026: 6		6 (2 new: the National Plan for EU Integration and the Code of Ethics in Broadcasting) 2024: 1
No. of communities engaged in dialogue and consensus building on alternatives to child marriage (including education), the rights of adolescents’ girls and GE	4	2024: 4 2026: 7		5 new BMCs (Cerrik, Klos, Patos, Rrogozhina and Kavaja Institute for Juveniles)
No. of men and boys engaged in promoting GE	2022: 250	2024: 250		780
OUTPUT 4.3 – GENDER-RESPONSIVE PLANNING AND BUDGETING. Government institutions at central and local levels have increased capacities to plan, budget, monitor, track expenditures, and leverage resources for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) in targeted sectors.				
% of national budget allocated to GE and women’s empowerment out of total budget	9	2024: 9.7	Medium-Term Budget Programme, Ministry of Finance Ministry of Finance UN Women Report FAO project report on RAS capacity building	9.1
No. of national partners with capacities to apply Gender-Responsive Budgeting tools in budget cycle	17: 10 line ministries, 2 oversight institutions, 5 municipalities	2024: 26 (11 line ministries, 3 oversight institutions, 12 municipalities)		26 (11 line ministries, 3 oversight institutions, and 12 municipalities)
Existence of roadmap for gender-responsive value chain development in pilot municipalities, and technical trainings and advice provided by Rural Advisory Services (RAS)	0	2024: 0		0
Tailored capacity development events conducted for rural advisory services and related partners on gender-responsive services and social behavioural change	0	2024: 1		0

OUTPUT 4.4 – GENDER EQUALITY MECHANISMS. National Gender Machinery and public administration at central and local levels have increased capacities support and monitor implementation of international and national commitments and EU priorities for gender equality.

Indicator	Baseline, all indicators, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2024, annual	Source	Status (end-December 2024)
No. of partners that have increased capacities to i) promote or influence gender-responsive legislation and its implementation, and (ii) advance GE and women’s empowerment through national or local (multi)sectoral strategies, policies or action plans	i) 10 ii) 4	2024: 2 (MoHSP and Parliament)	Membership lists of Monitoring Network Against GBV: CLCI, HRDC, ADRF, WFE, GADC, Refleksione, Sot për të ardhmen, CDTF, CRCA, Qendra Psiko-Sociale Vatra Relevant UN project documents and monitoring reports FAO capacity building activities	3 LGUs
No. of institutions that have increased capacities to design and implement institutional reforms, strategies, policies that promote GEWE	1	2024: 2 (EU4GE target municipalities)		0
No. of training and capacity development events for monitoring and reporting on SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2, and on advancing towards target 5.a and CEDAW article 14	0	2022: 0 2024: 4 (FAO)		4 FAO

OUTPUT 4.5 – LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION. Women and girls and gender equality advocates have increased capacities and opportunities to lead, participate, and influence decision-making processes at the national and local level.

No. of rural women who participate in LAGs	0	2024: 20 (LAG assembly participation of women members)	UN agencies project reports	UN Women: 7 women participate as board members in rural LAGs
No. of rural women who participate in agribusiness incubators	0	2024: 10		UN Women: 4 women active in Leskovik incubator
No. of private-sector companies that integrate gender-responsive family-friendly policies in the workplace	6	2024: 2		10 UNFPA
No. of initiatives that increase the capacities of journalism professionals to produce gender-sensitive reports on GE issues, with a focus also on women in leadership and politics	2023: 4 (media forum, CB interventions, other)	2024: 3 (UN Women) 2025: 3 (UN Women)	UN Women project report	3 media forums
No. of women, with increased capacities and access to tools to access and better exercise political leadership at local level and central level	2023: 0	2024:150 local councillors (UN Women) 2025: 150 potential women candidates to central elections; 150 women local councillors (UN Women)		30 trainers (29 F, 1 M) ready to build capacities of women in politics 16 women local councillors (UN Women) 15 women councillors from 3 LGUs in Durres, Kurbin and Lezha (UNDP)

Acronyms

AFPRS	Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service	GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH	NAES	National Agency for Employment and Skills	TCLF	Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear
AI	Artificial Intelligence	GoA	Government of Albania	NASRI	National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation	ToT	Training of Trainers
ALL	Albanian Lek	GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting	NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training	UHC	Universal Health Coverage
ASDG-AF	Albania SDG Acceleration Fund	GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence	NESS	National Employment and Skills Strategy	UK	United Kingdom
ASLG	Agency for Support of Local Governance	GTRG	Gender Thematic Results Group	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	UN	United Nations
BBB	Build Back Better	GYB	Grow Your Own Business	NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions	UNAA	United Nations Association Albania
BBT	Build Back Together	HII	High Impact Initiative	NSDEI	National Strategy for Development and European Integration	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
CCA	Common Country Analysis	HIV/STI	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Sexually transmitted Disease	NSSP	National Strategy on Social Protection	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	HLPF	High-Level Political Forum	OCOP	One Country One Priority Product Operations Management Team	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
CEI	Central European Initiative	HSE	Health and Safety Education	OMT	Occupational Health and Security	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
CFM	Child-Friendly Municipality	ICT	Information and Communications Technology	OSH	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
CIS	Community Infrastructure Support (project)	ILO	International Labour Organisation	PDNA	Persons with Disability	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework	PwD	Resident Coordinator	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
CRM	Coordinated Referral Mechanism	INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics	RC	Regional Cooperation Council	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education	IOM	International Organisation for Migration	RCC	Resident Coordinator Office	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	ISO	International Organization for Standardization	RCO	Resource-Efficient and Cleaner Production	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
DART	Digital Agriculture and Rural Transformation	IT	Information Technology	RECP	Recording Violence in Albania	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	ITU	International Telecommunication Union	SASPAC	State Agency for Strategic Programming and Assistance Coordination	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature	SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
ECE	Early Childhood Education	JEC	Joint Executive Committee	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	UNYTF	United Nations Youth Task Force
ERR	Economic Recovery and Resilience	JP	Joint Programme	SEEHN	South-Eastern Europe Health Network	UPHV	Universal Progressive Home Visiting
EU	European Union	LEAP	Lifelong Empowerment and Protection in Albania	Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women	LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure	USD	United States Dollar
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	LNB	Leave No One Behind	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	VAW	Violence Against Women
GBP	Pounds Sterling	MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths	VNR	Voluntary National Review
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	SWAP	Systemwide Action Plan	WHO	World Health Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection			YG	Youth Guarantee
GE	Gender Equality	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding				
GIS	Geographical Information System						



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