



JOINT
SDG
FUND

Joint Programme Document:

*LEAP Albania - Lifelong
Empowerment and
Protection in Albania*



COVER PAGE

MPTFO Project Reference Number	<i>(Leave blank, for automatic population in Quantum)</i>
Country	Albania
Region	Europe and Central Asia
Joint programme title:	LEAP Albania - Lifelong Empowerment and Protection in Albania
Duration:	24 months
Anticipated start and end dates:	11/2024 to 11/2026
Short description:	LEAP is a joint programme of the Government of Albania, which together with UNDP, UNICEF and ILO, aims to advance an inclusive and responsive social protection system to support individuals throughout their life cycle. This initiative strategically aligns with SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 16, focusing on poverty alleviation, health, education, gender equality, economic growth, and peace, justice and strong institutions, supporting SDG transition toward Jobs and Social Protection. The JP is organised around two interrelated expected results. Firstly, the JP will extend social protection coverage, integrating systems to enhance the quality and accessibility of services for children and families. This effort includes deploying a Universal Child Benefit and integrated care management strategies, Secondly, the JP aims to boost employability for social assistance beneficiaries by enhancing access to decent jobs through targeted and integrated employment and skills development initiatives. This includes a substantial focus on providing integrated employment and upskilling and reskilling support, particularly in sectors like hospitality and tourism, as well as on extending decent work opportunities and social insurance systems to seasonal workers. Through this JP, 700 households, beneficiaries of economic aid, will receive integrated care support and new services on Long-Term Care, while 60 of them will be prepared and placed into jobs available in the care sector. 530 will receive integrated employment and skills development support to facilitate transition towards available jobs in the Hospitality and Tourism sector and around 500 youth at risk of drop out will receive tailored skills training. In addition, this JP will reach out to at least 700 women in rural areas through mobile training units and placement services. Overall, the JP will implement robust engine room actions to 1. shift policy and regulatory frameworks, coupled with 2. capacity building at scale for public institutions and civil society and 3. Convene and build partnerships with public and private financiers to develop a ‘deal room’ for the transitions. It operates with at the both the policy level, by providing technical expertise on key reforms of the sectors, and strong municipal focus, delivering direct policy advice, technical guidance, and pilot model demonstrations to foster scalable national reforms linking social protection to employment. The JP's implementation strategy is expected to leverage significant additional financial resources – 26,500,000 USD – from the European Union and the Government of Albania. The holistic approach of the intervention ensures that the interventions contribute to long-term, sustainable development aligned with Albania's national priorities and SDG targets.

Joint Programme team:

Resident Coordinator	Fiona McCluney, fiona.mccluney@un.org
Joint Program RCO focal point	Azeta Collaku, Head of Office, azeta.collaku@un.org
Lead PUNO JP Focal point	UNDP, Eno Ngjela, Programme Specialist, eno.ngjela@undp.org
PUNO 2 JP Focal point	UNICEF, Enkeleda Bregu, Social Policy Specialist, ebregu@unicef.org
PUNO 3 JP Focal point	ILO, Zhuljeta Harasani, National Coordinator, harasani@ilo.org

Total budget: \$ 2,153,365

Source of funds:

UN Joint SDG Fund	\$ 1,800,000
PUNO 1 UNDP co-funding	\$ 160,000
PUNO 2 UNICEF co-funding	\$ 143,365
PUNO 3 ILO co-funding	\$ 50,000
Government co-funding	NA
International donor co-funding	NA
Other sources co-funding	NA

Legal context

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 forms the legal basis for the relationships between the Government and each of the UN organizations participating in this joint programme. It was signed between the Government of Albania (GoA) and each participating UN organizations (PUNO) on the 25th of October 2021 in Tirana, underscoring their joint commitment to priorities and cooperation results.

Other agreements that are the existing legal basis for the relationship between the GoA and each PUNO are the following:

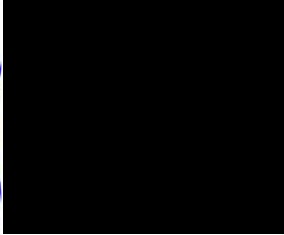
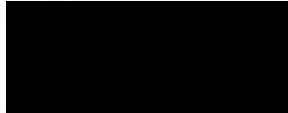
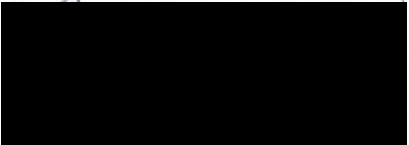
UNDP: Standard Basic Assistance Agreement signed between the GoA and UNDP on 17th of June 1991.

UNICEF: A Basic Cooperation Agreement concluded between the GoA and UNICEF on 23rd of July 1993.

ILO: A Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the GoA and ILO on 6th of February 2013.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT AND SIGNATURES

By signing this Joint Programme document, all signatories commit to work together in a spirit of partnership to achieve the results identified in the results framework, work plan and budget.

Co-Chairs of JP Steering Committee		
Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation <i>Blendi Gonxhja</i>  Date:	Minister of Health and Social Protection <i>Albana Koçiu</i>  Date:	UN Resident Coordinator <i>Fiona McCluney</i>  Date: 16-Oct-2024
Participating UN Organizations		
<i>Monica Merino</i>  UNDP Date: 16/10/2024	<i>Murat Sahin</i>  UNICEF Date: 16-Oct-2024	<i>Claire Harasty</i>  ILO Date: 17-Oct-2024
Non-UN Partners (as applicable)		

JOINT PROGRAMME PROFILE

Contribution to Cooperation Framework Outcome(s) and Output(s)	This JP primarily contributes to Priority A and B of the Cooperation Framework: STRATEGIC PRIORITY A. Human capital development & social inclusion. Outcome A: By 2026, there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion. Output 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 STRATEGIC PRIORITY B. Sustainable, resilient and green economic growth and resource management. Outcome B: 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. Output 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.
SDG Targets directly addressed by the Joint Programme	This JP aligns with SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) SDG4 (Quality Education, SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship 5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision- making in political, economic and public life 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value 16.6.1: Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)
Expected key results of the Joint Programme	Result 1: By the end of the joint programme, Albania will have an extended coverage and integrated social protection system with a focus on child benefits, family support, and enhanced quality and outreach of care services. Result 2: By the end of JP, Albania will have increased employability and access to decent work opportunities for marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, through targeted employment and skills development services.
Overview of transformative change	

- Integration	Under this JP, Albania aims to implement a holistic activation approach by integrating social protection, employment, and care services to create a seamless system of support (Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection). Coordinated policy and regulatory frameworks will be restructured to better meet these inclusive and equitable goals, ensuring a unified response across all sectors. Integration will be enhanced through development of tools and guidelines, capacity building of professionals, as well as through designing integrated IT solutions, to ensure that technology is leveraged to enhance service delivery, streamline processes, and improve access to social protection and employment services (Digital Transformation).
- Scale	The JP will significantly expand social protection and employment services to effectively activate and support marginalised groups, particularly women and youth. This will involve developing scalable models for Universal Child Benefits (UCB) and integrated care management, directly impacting over 86,000 children in the initial phase through UCB developed with the support of the JP and delivered by the MoHSP. New social services will be available for the 51,000 families who are beneficiaries of social assistance. In parallel, under result 2, new Active Labour Market Programmes delivered in partnership will be included as part of the national portfolio and will be available for the 27,000 beneficiaries of social assistance registered with the Public Employment Services. The JP is expected to leverage 26,500,000 of additional finances from the government of Albania and the EU (see table 8).
- Speed	To address the urgent needs of the marginalised populations, the JP is designed for accelerated implementation of key interventions, employing streamlined processes and increased capacity among stakeholders. This approach ensures a rapid response to emerging needs and crises, a crucial aspect during the initial nine months where quick action is fundamental. During the initial nine months of this JP, significant milestones will be achieved in enhancing social protection, employability, and care services. Key achievements include the full development of the Child Benefit program with a clear operational roadmap to target initially 86,000 children, the launch of innovative long-term care solutions in two municipalities, and the establishment of training and employment initiatives that benefit over 1,730 individuals directly, including professional certification for 200 care professionals and job placement for caregivers.
- Local context-specific	Financial sustainability is prioritized through diversified funding and resource flows to support long-term project viability. Institutional strengthening and capacity-building efforts will be focused on maintaining and enhancing the quality of service delivery across various municipalities, tailored to the specific socio-economic contexts of each region. For result 1 it will engage with local stakeholders to understand the supply and demand for care services to produce an assessment of LTC. For result 2 it will engage with youth and women to conduct local diagnosis of undeclared work in the Hospitality and Tourism sector, as well as will engage with employers to identify incentives for enterprise formalisation.
- Sustainability	The JP strategically integrates catalytic interventions designed to enhance sustainability and ensure transformative change in social protection, employment, and care services. Key initiatives under result 1 include the development and implementation of Universal Child Benefits, integrated care management systems, and professional development for care service providers are foundational to creating resilient social systems that uphold the principles

	of inclusivity and sustainability. Key initiatives under result 2 include Integrated employment and skills development services and programmes, services to retain decent jobs and formalize enterprises, flexible working arrangements and inclusive hiring policies. Through these catalytic interventions, the programme will support enhancement of regulatory frameworks, will capacitate professionals and will establish new pipeline projects which can be financed. This lays the groundwork for long-term, systemic changes that will continue to benefit marginalised populations well into the future.
Anticipated direct beneficiaries	At least 700 households beneficiaries of economic aid (around 2,800 individuals), will receive integrated care support and new services on long term care, while 60 individual within these households will be prepared and placed into jobs available in the care sector. (total number of households was around 51,000 in 2023) At least 530 women and youth, beneficiaries of economic aid, or laid-off from the garment industry will receive integrated employment and skills development support to facilitate their transition toward jobs available in the Hospitality and Tourism sectors. (total number of economic aid beneficiaries registered as unemployed jobseekers with Public Employment Services was around 27,000) At least 500 youth age 14-17, at risk of drop out will received skills training and placement support. At least 700 women in rural areas will be reached out through mobile training units and integrated outreach services. At least 250 professionals will be capacitated on integrated care services, integrated case management. Policy makers at central level to adopt new policy frameworks on UCB, LTC, social security for seasonal workers, active labour market programmes delivered in partnership. Total number of anticipated direct beneficiaries: 4,780 individuals
Anticipated financial leverage	The total amount is \$ 26,853,365 - Co-funding (within the JP budget): \$ 353,365 (UNDP: \$ 160,000; UNICEF: 143,365; ILO: 50,000) - Co-financing (parallel to JP budget): \$ 26,500,000 (MoECI on ALMPs: \$12,000,000; MoHSP on social service: \$ 5,900,000; MoHSP on UCB: \$6,600,000; EU for social inclusion: \$2,000,000)
Localization marker score	2

The primary focus on SDG Transitions in the JP
Select all that are incorporated into the JP strategy and results.

- ☒ Digital Transformation
- ☐ Food Systems
- ☒ Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection
- ☐ Energy Access and Affordability
- ☐ Transforming Education

Main engine room actions that the JP supports

Select all that are incorporated into the JP strategy and results.

- ☐ Climate, Biodiversity, Pollution
- ☒ Shifts across policy and regulatory frameworks
- ☒ Capacity building at scale
- ☒ Deal room (financing mix)
- ☐ Pipeline of bankable and market-ready projects

Contributions to Jobs and Social Protection Transition

GA policy priorities addressed by the JP

Select all that are incorporated into the JP strategy and results.

- ☒ Social protection extension including access to health care.
- ☒ Decent jobs creation.
- ☒ Skills development.
- ☐ Support to small and microenterprises. ☐ Others please specify:

.....

Just transitions that this JP enables

Select all that are incorporated into the JP strategy and results..

- ☒ Formalization of employment and enterprises
- ☐ Agri-food systems transformation.
- ☐ Just Energy Transitions.
- ☐ Climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- ☒ Structural transformation of the economy (specify sectors: Hospitality and Tourism)
- ☒ Demographic transition leading to specific care support.
- ☒ Access to the labour market for specific groups (e.g. youth, women, persons with disabilities)
- ☐ Others please specify:

JOINT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Executive Summary

Rationale and Relevance of the Joint Programme

The LEAP Albania (Lifelong Empowerment and Protection in Albania) joint programme is a transformative initiative aimed at advancing inclusive and responsive social protection systems in Albania. Albania, an upper-middle-income country, faces significant development challenges. Political instability, economic diversification, and social inclusion remain critical areas of concern. High emigration rates, particularly among the youth, and a declining birth rate have resulted in a decreased population of children aged 0-14 from 21.6% in 2011 to 16.3% in 2022 (INSTAT). This demographic shift predicts a significant impact on the labour force in the coming decades. Additionally, approximately 25% of young people are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), exacerbating labour market challenges (INSTAT 2022). Poverty and social exclusion remain pressing issues, with 27.4% of children living in poverty, compared to 20.6% of the general population (EU-SILC 2022). Furthermore, 50.1% of children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2021), highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive social protection and care services.

The JP aims to address these challenges by extending social protection coverage and integrating systems to enhance the quality and accessibility of services for children and families. Key initiatives include the deployment of a Universal Child Benefit (UCB) and integrated care management strategies. Strengthening social protection systems is crucial for increasing the fiscal space in social protection, particularly investment in children, which is currently below the EU average. Government spending on social protection in Albania is 9.6% of GDP, compared to the EU average of 20.5% (2022).

Albania's growing tourism sector, contributing over 8% to GDP, faces a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The Skills Needs Assessment of the Hospitality and Tourism Sector reveals that 88% of businesses struggled to fill vacancies, and 41% of employees lack professional skills (Sectoral SNA Hospitality and Tourism 2024 forthcoming). This sector's high seasonality and reliance on informal work further complicate employment conditions. The JP aims to boost employability for social assistance beneficiaries by enhancing access to decent jobs through targeted employment and skills development initiatives. This includes providing integrated employment and upskilling and reskilling support, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors, and extending decent work opportunities and social insurance systems to seasonal workers.

By addressing these critical areas through targeted interventions, the JP aims to enhance the quality of life for marginalised populations, promote sustainable development, and align with Albania's national priorities and SDG targets. The programme's focus on child benefits, family support, care services, and employment opportunities ensures a holistic approach to overcoming Albania's socio-economic challenges.

Leveraging an integrated systems approach to the SDG transitions of Decent Jobs and Universal Social protection and Digital Transformation, this programme emphasizes comprehensive social protection, employment, and care services. It focuses on critical "engine room" actions, including policy shifts, capacity building at scale, the development of sustainable, locally contextualized solutions, as well as convene and build partnerships with public and private financiers to develop a 'deal room' for the transitions. The programme integrates key dimensions of transformative change: it aims to create a

unified support system through integration, significantly expand service coverage and impact through scale, ensure rapid implementation to address urgent needs with speed, tailor interventions to local socio-economic contexts for local context-specific relevance, and promote long-term sustainability by embedding catalytic interventions. By addressing key challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and insufficient care services, the programme aims to enhance the quality of life for marginalised populations and align with Albania's national priorities and SDG targets.

Expected Results and Contribution to Frameworks

The joint programme is structured around two interrelated outcomes, anchored in the current Albania-United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026:

Result 1: Extended coverage and integrated social protection system with a focus on child benefits, family support, and enhanced quality and outreach of care services. The programme will enhance the quality and accessibility of social protection services for children and families. Key initiatives include the deployment of a Universal Child Benefit (UCB), integrated care management strategies, development of innovative Long-Term Care models and roadmaps for scale up, as well as capacity building for care professionals.

Result 2: Increased employability and access to decent work opportunities for marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, through targeted employment and skills development services. The programme aims to improve employability for social assistance beneficiaries through targeted employment and skills development initiatives, establishing partnerships among public, non-public and private providers, utilizing existing expertise at the local level to provide tailored and individualised support to transition towards jobs available in the Hospitality and Tourism sector. Relevant professionals will be capacitated on integrated case management. Under this outcome, policy options to expand social insurance for seasonal workers will be developed, and diagnosis of working conditions within the sector will be explored.

These outcomes align with the Cooperation Framework (CF) results, country priorities, the Global Accelerator Roadmap, and related SDG targets, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Intended Beneficiaries

The programme targets marginalised groups with a particular focus on women and youth. It aims to establish new programmes for at least 86,000 children, new social services targeting 51,000 families who are beneficiaries of social assistance and new Active Labour Market Programmes delivered in partnership for the activation of at least the 27,000 beneficiaries of social assistance registered with the Public Employment Services. The pilots delivered through this JP are expected to directly benefit at least 1,730 individuals, 700 households and 250 professionals, with the following support:

- 700 households receiving economic aid, with integrated care support and long-term care services.
- 530 women and youth through employment and skills development support to transition to available jobs in the Hospitality and Tourism sector.
- 500 youth (14-17 years old) at risk of dropping out through tailored skills training.
- 700 women in rural areas via mobile training units and placement services.
- 250 professionals of care and employment services will be capacitated on integrated care services and case management.

- Policy makers at central level to adopt new policy frameworks on UCB, LTC, social security for seasonal workers, active labour market programmes delivered in partnership.

Joint Programme Partners

The successful implementation of the LEAP Albania programme relies on a broad coalition of partners including:

Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs): UNDP (lead), UNICEF, ILO.

Government: Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MoECI), Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Other stakeholders: European Union Delegation, World Bank, Swiss Development Cooperation.

The financing strategy for the JP involves leveraging the resources of Government of Albania and initiatives of key international partners, including the European Union (EU), World Bank (WB), and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), to support the implementation and sustainability of the JP. To ensure financial sustainability, the JP will Work with the Government of Albania to secure national budget allocations for long-term support of JP initiatives. The Government of Albania will play a crucial role in the financial sustainability of the JP by incorporating its initiatives into national policies and budgets. This involves securing funding through the national budget and ensuring alignment with the broader socio-economic development goals of the country. The government will prioritize funding for social protection, (child benefits, LTC, and social services) and employment programmes (ALMPs delivered in partnership), thereby demonstrating national ownership and commitment.

It will also maintain close coordination with international donors to maximize resource utilization and share technical assistance. The EU Delegation in Albania is actively engaged in supporting social inclusion and employment through various programmes. The JP will align with and complement the EU-funded Technical Assistance (TA) projects, particularly in social care services, employment, and inclusive education. The EU's support includes the development of a regulatory framework for Long-Term Care (LTC) and integrated social care services, which directly complements the JP's focus on enhancing care services and employment opportunities. The EU is expected to provide approximately \$2 million in TA to support these initiatives. The WB's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Albania focuses on inclusive growth and social assistance reform. The JP will build on the WB's efforts in reforming social assistance programs and developing new childcare policies. This alignment ensures that the JP benefits from the WB's financial and technical expertise. Discussions with the WB indicate potential funding support for the JP's initiatives, particularly in the areas of social protection and employment. SDC's programmes in Albania target economic development, vocational training, and social inclusion. The JP will coordinate closely with SDC-funded initiatives to strengthen vocational education and employment services, ensuring that these efforts are harmonized with national development goals. This JP will ensure complementarity with the ongoing initiatives financed by the SDC and implemented by various UN agencies in Albania (see list of projects in annex 1).

Through this collaborative effort, the programme seeks to create a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable social protection system in Albania, fostering long-term socio-economic development and alignment with European integration goals.

2. Baseline and Situation Analysis

Albania, an upper-middle-income country with significant strides towards human development, faces ongoing challenges in political stability, economic diversification, and social inclusion. As described in the UN Common Country Analysis (May 2023), Albania faces significant development and human rights challenges toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Political polarization and continuous judicial reforms—together with initiatives on the vetting of judges and formation of new judicial bodies for strengthening the rule of law and reducing corruption—carry on. Although some progress has been made in reducing corruption, controversial measures that impact security, money laundering, and organized crime include the Citizenship for Investment program and the fiscal amnesty law.

The country has made strides in aligning its legal and policy framework with international human rights standards, but the effective implementation of these laws remains a priority. It has a solid normative framework in place to promote, enforce, and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, but gender-based exclusion remains a reality for most girls and women in Albania.

The country also suffers from adverse demography, as high emigration rates, mostly youth, and the low birth rate continue. The age group of the population 0-14 years has decreased: from 21.6% in 2011 to 16.3% in 2022 (INSTAT), anticipating a significant impact on the labour force in the next decades.. Job accessibility is difficult by the marginalised groups, including women, youth, and rural dwellers. In 2022, almost one out of four young persons was not in education, employment or training (INSTAT). Challenges to access the labour market are exacerbated by high informality, especially among the marginalised groups in their work and training, and mismatches with employment opportunities, with implications for SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The crisis of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have escalated the country's economic vulnerabilities, particularly in agriculture and energy.

Strengthening social protection systems and labour market policies are essential in realizing SDG1, SDG 8 and SDG 16. Albania has made progress in social protection, such as increased resources for social care services and cash assistance. However, making these services available to all the other marginalised groups, particularly those that reside in rural areas, is still a challenge. Furthermore, employment policies have not yet recognized informal work and related education and training programs to the demands of the labour market. Finally, the care services remain insufficient, which also hampers access of women to the labour market.

It is through addressing these development and human rights challenges that the country will fully achieve its commitment to the SDGs and realization of possible EU integration goals. It is a multidisciplinary effort to ensure that reforms undertaken, and policies implemented are inclusive and sustainable, supporting a just and resilient society.

2.1 CCA and CF context summary

Albania is undergoing significant economic and social transformations, characterized by efforts to improve economic growth and social inclusion. Politically, the country is focused on strengthening democratic institutions and governance, while environmentally, it is addressing sustainability challenges and climate change impacts. The demographic decline remains among the priority transformative challenges identified for the government.¹ Institutional frameworks are evolving to support these transformations,

¹ <https://ies.lublin.pl/en/comments/albania-the-demographic-crisis-and-its-consequences/>

aiming to align with European standards and integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national policies.

Table 1: **Economic, social, political, environmental and institutional context for the JP in relation to the proposed results**

Economic context	The economy is sustained by strong private consumption, tourism, and construction activities, keeping growth specifically high. The economy, stagnant from 2011 to 2015, began to grow modestly from 2016; annual real growth rates dropped in 2020 to recover to the pre-pandemic level in 2022. The GDP per capita (PPP) reached 14,639 USD in 2021 (est. 15,935 in 2023), which is 34.3% of the EU average. Despite these improvements, a significant informal economy persisted, estimated to constitute 30 to 50% of GDP. Real GDP is expected to increase by 3.3% in 2024, giving a good basis for this JP. Encouraging as it is, this performance is still at risk from developments such as high inflation, worsening climate damages, and rising global geopolitical tensions. Managing these risks is critical to ensuring economic resilience and protecting efforts initiated to keep jobs decent, formalise enterprises, and promote inclusive employment practices. Despite some recovery, challenges like low women participation in the labour market (52.9% in 2023, INSTAT, LFS), high youth unemployment (26.94 in 2023, INSTAT, LFS, rural disparities, long-term unemployment (66% in 2023, INSTAT, LFS), and substantial informal employment persist. The country has high levels of informal work, educational mismatches, and considerable barriers to employment for marginalised groups comprising women, youth and rural population. The country faces skills mismatch issues, with many overqualified for their jobs. Education quality remains a concern, with the VET system needing to align better with labour market needs. Digitalization of public services poses accessibility issues for marginalised communities due to education, skills, and financial constraints. This JP aims to support the Hospitality and Tourism sector by providing qualified staff and promoting decent job opportunities. Albania's tourism industry has greatly boosted the economy, contributing over 8% to the GDP. The sector is recovering well post-COVID-19, with foreign tourist arrivals reaching 10.1 million in 2023, leading to increased employment. However, there are concerns about growing informality due to international booking platforms. High seasonality and reliance on "sun and beach" tourism are challenges for Albania's tourism sector. Albania's tourism sector faces a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. According to the Skills Needs Assessment of the Hospitality and Tourism Sector, 88% of businesses struggled to fill vacancies in the last 12 months. Currently, 41% of employees are lacking professional skills, 39% struggle with high-intensity work, 23% lack communication and ethics, and 22% lack organizational skills. Skills shortages are attributed to reasons such as frequent job changes and emigration (45%), insufficient knowledge at recruitment (36%), lack of motivation (36%), and inadequate post-recruitment training (19%). (Sectoral SNA Hospitality and Tourism, 2024, forthcoming)
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Social context

Albania is staggering under a demographic decline as the statistics mirror the people's high emigration and a falling birth rate, reflecting an ever-increasing old-age dependency ratio. Social insurance is expected to take a meaningful fraction of government spending: it is projected to rise to 42% of all recurrent expenditure by 2025. Back in 2019, 44.5% of the working-age population (aged 20-64) in Albania contributed to the Social Insurance System, highlighting the need for further acceleration to ensure Albania's social protection system sustainability.

Albania ranks 61 in HDI, showing progress, but rural and minority groups face challenges with limited infrastructure, early marriage, and teen pregnancy. Albania has made efforts to address poverty, with a decrease in the number of individuals living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. However, disparities persist, with child poverty levels higher than for adults. At risk of poverty or social exclusion² was 43.9%. Girls and women are at higher risk than men (EU-SILC, 2021). According to Eurostat 2021 statistics, 50.1% of children (1 in 2) in Albania are reported at-risk for poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2021), a concerning figure, compared to the rest of EU countries (24.4 %). Poverty and social exclusion remain an issue, especially amongst children. According to INSTAT, EU SILC report for Albania, while 20.6 % of the population was assessed to be at risk of poverty in 2022 (EU-SILC, 2022) this figure rises to more than one-fourth when it comes to children (27.4%), with girls more affected (28.6%).

Disparities in poverty and inequality remain, affecting marginalized groups such as women, youth, households with children, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and elderly.

Albania's National Agenda for Children (2021-2026) underscores the importance of coordinated services for children up to three years. However, significant gaps exist in implementing measures for children aged 0-3. Accessibility to preschool institutions is hindered by infrastructure and transportation issues, particularly in rural areas. Health services for children under six vary between urban and rural regions, with rural areas facing challenges in accessing qualified medical services. Early identification and intervention services for children with disabilities aged 0-3 are lacking.

Long-term care (LTC) is officially recognised for individuals with disabilities and those aged 65+. Women face specific barriers to aging well including health disparities, unequal access to health care and retirement savings, and a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities. Home services remain unavailable, and non-public centres primarily provide social services, often limited to people with disabilities. Obstacles to women's labour market participation include insufficient childcare and social services for the elderly and disabled. Collaboration between social care and healthcare is minimal, especially in rural areas lacking social care services. Social and health insurance schemes do not cover cash and in-kind benefits for those requiring care and informal caregivers. Traditional family caregiving is changing due to shifting family structures, leading to social isolation for many seniors.

² As per EU-SILC definition "At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion" refers to the individuals who are at risk of poverty or severe materially deprived or living in a household with very low work intensity.

Political context	Following the end of the communist regime, Albania's transition to a parliamentary democratic republic has laid the groundwork for governance reforms. The constitution adopted in 1998 upholds democracy, human rights, and minority protection, which are essential for the joint programme's success. Regular and competitive elections are fundamental for maintaining institutional checks and balances. The ongoing judicial reforms and anti-corruption measures will support the programme's goals by fostering a stable political environment necessary for implementing comprehensive support systems to activate economic assistance (NE) beneficiaries and facilitate their entry into the workforce. In 2014, Albania was granted the status of candidate to the European Union, and in March 2020, accession negotiations began. The accession process represents an opportunity for the country to strengthen and modernize its social protection, employment and other social services laws and institutions.
Environmental context	Albania's reliance on agriculture and energy sectors underscores the importance of climate readiness in this JP. Climate changes, including milder winters and extreme weather, impact energy production and agriculture, necessitating a focus on climate readiness. Environmental sustainability efforts will be integrated into all aspects of the programme to ensure long-term resilience and economic stability. This includes developing comprehensive support systems for environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation to mitigate the impact of climate changes on energy production and agriculture.
Institutional context	There are significant normative and institutional gaps in areas such as economic transformation, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and governance. Efforts to address informal work and align education and training programs with labour market needs are essential for economic transformation. It is vital to have comprehensive policies for responsive social protection and employment containing salient features for integration into other frames of building a just and resilient society. Governance and the rule of law reforms are pivotal in building a just and resilient society, while integrated social protection and employment approaches are necessary to ensure that no one is left behind in a context of multiple transitions. The JP will provide targeted outreach and integrated case management to support young people's transition to stable employment. Comprehensive support systems will be developed to activate new-entrant beneficiaries particularly rural women and facilitate their entry into the workforce. The institutional framework will also focus on delivering integrated employment and skills development services in partnership with relevant local and regional stakeholders, including municipalities, employers, trade-unions and other non-public providers. In this sense, the National Labour Council will play an important role in implementing this JP.
Inequalities and Vulnerabilities	The JP will tackle the immediate, underlying, and root causes of inequalities and vulnerabilities in Albania by addressing high levels of informal work, the mismatches between education and job opportunities, obstacles to access labour market, in particular for youth and women, and the social exclusion of marginalised groups in the underlying and root causes of inequalities and vulnerabilities in Albania. Women and girls and men and boys have these problems differently: women are more

exposed to the risk of poverty, face limited access to education and employment, and experience discrimination, particularly those in rural areas at workplace and in their life.

The coverage of the population with social services has increased over the years both from the beneficiary and from the geographical point of view. From 10,000 beneficiaries in 2019 or 0.35% of the population to 42,553 beneficiaries in 2022 or 1.5% of the population (the target of the 2023 social protection strategy was a coverage level of 0.5% of the population for 2022)³. The number of municipalities (25 in 2022, i.e. 41% of the total) that provide community social services for at least 3 categories of beneficiaries (PwD, children, elderly) has also increased, but coverage in rural areas remains low. Mobile services to support rural and remote areas, family-based services and specialized services remain insufficient to cover the needs of specific marginalised groups and the entire territory.

Existing integrated case management practices, including of the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES), State Social Services (SSS) and municipal social services, reveal that marginalised groups have a multiplicity of needs, which hinder their labour market and social integration. During 2023, 7,542 beneficiaries benefited from Integrated employment and social services throughout Albania. Of these, 35% did not attend the counselling sessions provided by the Employment Office. Among those who did attend, 81% declined further services. The reasons for this were: 35% lacked transportation, 18% had health issues, 23% had care responsibilities and lacked care services, 5% were due to age (55+), and 21% had other reasons. The remaining 900 people benefited from employment and skill development opportunities (NAES, administrative data 2023). This indicates that the integrated services need to be strengthened, and available employment and training programmes must be adapted to serve marginalised populations' multiple employability and participation barriers.

High-quality, disaggregated data—especially gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated statistics—will be applied and enhanced to formulate effective policies. Broadly, the program, therefore, seeks to eliminate disparities and enhance social and economic inclusion for all marginalised populations.

2.2 Global Accelerator roadmap

On June 9, 2023, Albania expressed interest in joining the Global Accelerator as a pathfinder country, committed to investing in jobs and social protection. In October-November 2023, the Government of Albania, jointly with the UN country team (UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UN Women, FAO), developed the GA roadmap under UNICEF and UNDP guidance. Consultations with civil society and social partners during December 2023, confirmed the roadmap's relevance, emphasizing the focus on the following four entry points:

- **Entry point 1:** Strengthen adaptive social protection for Persons with Disabilities by enhancing

³ MoHSP, 2023, NSPS Monitoring Report for 2022.

disability reform, inclusive employment and skills development policies, early-age support, through partnerships and collaboration.

- **Entry point 2:** Building an Inclusive Social Protection System for Economic Security and Social Equity
- **Entry point 3:** Facilitate increased private sector involvement in TVET programs, with a special emphasis on digital and entrepreneurship skills development targeting youth and women, particularly those from vulnerable communities and in rural areas.
- **Entry Point 4:** Sustainable Financing for Employment and Social Protection.

The roadmap aligns with the national priorities outlined in the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 (NESS) and the National Social Protection Strategy 2024-2030 (NSPS). It aims at 70% employment rate (from 60,1% in 2021) and 25% adult participation in lifelong learning (from 9,2% in 2017) by 2030. There are four main policy responses that reinforce social protection policies, pertaining to creating integrated pathways for labour market inclusion of marginalised groups, such as women, people with disabilities, youth (with a particular focus on NEET), and beneficiaries of cash assistance. In parallel, NESS puts focus on strengthening the role of Public Employment Services, as a catalyst of the labour market, by making use of the entire labour market ecosystem, as well as improving policies on decent work. NSPS 2024-2030 aims at reducing poverty for families in need and enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities through appropriate, well-structured, transparent, and risk-responsive financial schemes; and (2) expanding integrated and quality social services and advancing deinstitutionalization in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the strategy incorporates shock-responsive measures, strengthen linkages to labour market, extend coverage, improve adequacy, and support decentralisation and deinstitutionalization of residential care. The new strategy is informed by the EU social acquis and policies and EU Pillar on Social Rights as part of the ongoing European integration process.

Consultations with the IPMG on Human Capital Development⁴ and the respective thematic group during May 2024, between UN agencies and the GoA, represented by the two deputy ministers of the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MoECI) and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), identified the main priorities for the sector which drove conceptualisation of the JP for the GA. They are outlined as follows:

- **Reskilling for priority industries:** Reskill and upskill economic assistance recipients for employment in tourism and hospitality, adapting to labour market demands.
- **Transition support for marginalised and laid off workers:** Facilitate workforce transitions from the garment industry to tourism and other high-value sectors, reducing reliance on unemployment benefits
- **Reintegration programs:** Launch innovative labour market programmes to enhance employment for cash assistance recipients, focusing on startup models and community employment in rural areas.
- **Develop scenarios and support operationalisation of a Child Benefit Programme and integrated service delivery (health, educational and care services).**
- **Strengthen care programmes by building capacity of workforce engaged in provision of new care services models, particularly for home visits and mobile services.**
- **Evidence-based policy and case management:** Implement an electronic registry for efficient case management at the municipal level, strengthen labour market and social protection information

⁴ The IPMG on Human Capital Development is the Global Accelerator's National Steering Committee.

systems (sex-disaggregated and interoperability).

Based on the government priorities, The PUNOs worked together to design and develop a concept note which is fully aligned with Entry Point 2 of the GA roadmap. The concept note was later shared with the two ministries, and they have consulted it in the IPMG on Human Capital Development and the Thematic Group on Employment, Skills and Decent Jobs, which were held during June 2024. Member of the IPMG are: Minister of Education and Sports, Minister of Health and Social Protection, Minister of Culture, Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Minister of Tourism and Environment, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Minister of State for Youth and Children, Minister of State for Enterprise Protection, Director General of SASPAC and National Agency for Employment and Skills. Invited to the IPMG are also: representatives from the National Labour Council, Trade Unions, private sector (chambers, association), providers of social services, association of municipalities and regions, NGOs, donors and international development partners. This JP was presented by the two deputy ministers and was thoroughly discussed with the members of the IPMG and the Thematic working group. All comments received were reflected and are part of this document.

2.3 Opportunities and stakeholders for SDG transition

○ Defining the domain of change

This JP operates within the boundaries of GA and it focuses on the most mature priorities and ready for transformative change at scale. This approach ensures impactful, scalable, and sustainable interventions. The domain of change includes several interrelated **subsystems: social protection, employment, upskilling and reskilling, and care services**, targeting systemic issues and promoting inclusive development. Designed around the SDGs and the "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) principle, the JP ensures that marginalised groups are included and supported.

The scope of the JP includes **enhancing integrated care management** and **promoting employment and skills development**. It also focuses on developing Universal Child Benefits (UCB), supporting professional care occupations and **delivering innovative policy solutions** for labour market inclusivity and enhancing efficiency and care service quality. However, the scope excludes broader economic reforms beyond targeted support for marginalised groups and initiatives not directly contributing to the JP's core objectives. This focus allows for concentrated efforts on areas with the highest potential for transformative impact and broad stakeholder support.

The area of change is embedded with a vision of transforming the systems of social protection and employment in Albania towards more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable processes. JP will aim to **expand the coverage and integration** of social protection systems, with particular emphasis on child benefits, care services and social insurance. It also seeks to **improve opportunities for employment with skill development**, especially for marginalised groups such as women, youth, and rural residents, by **scaling up innovative policy solutions** that address systemic barriers by making inclusion and equity a reality.

In this regard, JP will develop interactive linkages within and across different SDG transitions, particularly from SDG 1 (No Poverty) to SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). At the same time, its interventions will have a cross-cutting effect on the total development of creating an inclusive and resilient society.

However, there have been groups that are difficult to reach through dedicated activities because of resource limitations, with the need to focus on the areas where most can be reached. By defining its change domain, the JP ensures that its interventions are focused, effective, and well-aligned with national priorities and the SDGs. The initiative aligns with Albania's national priorities and the EU pre-accession human rights standards by addressing critical development challenges and fostering inclusive economic growth.

- **Pathways of change**

This table describes the problem space, solution spaces and indicates a series of potential pathways of change that might bring about transformative impact, listing entry points for catalytic interventions in the social protect and employment sectors.

Table 2: **Pathways to change**

Problem Space	Solution Space	Pathways to change
Insufficient social protection system and limited access to quality care services. Inadequate long-term care (LTC) services, particularly in rural areas. Insufficient support for professional care occupations and integration of care services, impacting the quality and outreach of care. Fragmentation and limited capacities of social care services to effectively address the needs of the most marginalised children and families accompanied by little capacities in outreaching families in rural and remote areas. Many individuals and families face economic hardships, leading to poverty and social exclusion. This results in limited access to essential services such as education, healthcare, employment, social protection and other vital social care services, perpetuating their disadvantaged status. Only 19.8% of those marginalised are covered by at least one social protection benefit (ILO). Access to services is also hindered by limited availability of services, especially in rural areas, geographical constraints and absence of a functional and wide	Strengthening social protection systems and expanding access to quality care services. Develop comprehensive UCB costing options operationalisation mechanisms. Assess the cost of the reform and sustainable financing mechanisms and policy adjustments for social protection initiatives. The introduction of UCB will contribute to increasing the fiscal space in social protection, particularly investment in children. Integrated service delivery and care management will be central in this JP - through the Universal Home Visit Programme, enhance LTC services and support to different groups, as women, youth, and NE beneficiaries.	Social protection and care services for inclusive and equitable support. Improved social protection coverage, economic stability, and reduced poverty among marginalised populations. Access to and quality of care services, particularly in rural areas and better support for caregivers. Accelerate engagement with local actors, civil society organizations and other partners. Capacity building for professionals at the local level. Frontline professionals at the local level will receive on-the-job training, mentoring and support to improve their skills and knowledge in delivering effective services to the target groups. Strengthening Local Civil Society Organizations: The JP will collaborate with local CSOs specialised in social services provision, supporting them in enhancing their capacity and

Problem Space	Solution Space	Pathways to change
coverage of public transportation services. Moreover, in the absence of robust social protection systems the marginalised populations remain adequately protected and supported, especially during times of crisis or emergencies. Current social protection systems do not adequately cover all marginalised groups, particularly children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. In addition, there is limited fiscal space and sustainable financing to support comprehensive social protection policies. The social protection expenditure in Albania accounts for about 9 % of the GDP^[1], representing the largest budget contribution among the other public sectors such as health and education. Albania's total spending in social sectors is significantly lower compared to the EU average. In 2022, government spending in education was 3% of GDP compared to EU's 4.8%; health accounted for 3.1% compared to EU's 8.1% and social protection made up 9.6% compared to EU's 20.5%.^[3] Moreover, the increase in overall public spending since 2020 has not benefited children proportionately. Expenditure on children has grown more slowly than overall expenditures, although the proportion of children in the population has not changed significantly^[2].	Guiding strengthening/adopting an effective model of integrated service delivery will ensure that various social care services are available at a horizontal level with education and health care services in a coordinated manner enhancing efficiency and addressing complexity of needs for families on the economic aid. Using the electronic register on social care services will facilitate evidence based case management and intersectoral coordination. Using mobile services to overcome geographical barriers and support the underserved communities, especially those in remote or marginalized areas, providing home-based essential care services. The JP will support the development of professional care occupations to improve the quality of LTC services.	outreach alongside advocating for the rights of marginalised groups. Overall, the JP seeks to improve the situation of the target groups and final beneficiaries by creating a more inclusive, accessible, and supportive social care system that addresses their specific needs and constraints. It will help integrate a human rights-based and gender-based approach and equal access in service planning and delivery.
Limited access and typology of labour market reintegration services and inadequate capacities of service providers at the local level. Most NE beneficiaries face a diverse set of barriers which limit their readiness for employment and appeal to	Promoting formal employment and skill development; reducing gender disparities and long-term unemployment.	Enhancing formal employment, skill development, and inclusion for women, youth, and marginalized communities.

Problem Space	Solution Space	Pathways to change
employers. Many have not completed primary education or have had long periods of unemployment which can lead to skills degradation, limited motivation, and low confidence in the ability to work or even in the ability to search for a job. Women's labour market participation is significantly hindered by insufficient support services, including childcare and eldercare. In addition, women have also been disproportionately affected by job cuts in industries such as the garment sector. Women are disadvantaged in rural labour market, which limits their economic independence and empowerment. The funding allocated to ALMPs is low compared to the need, and the coverage of the most socially marginalised group is very limited. In 2023, only ALL 450 million (the equivalent of 0.02 % of GDP) was earmarked to employment promotion programs, substantially less than the Western Balkan average. In that same year, around 4,500 jobseekers took part in ALMPs (vocational training excluded), and less than 10% were from marginalised groups. Informal employment accounts for above 55% of total employment. Informal workers face substantial decent work deficits, such as long hours, low wages, lack of social protection, income insecurity, and heightened vulnerability to violence and harassment, particularly among women. Families and individuals receiving economic aid lack opportunities for upskilling, decent and long-term employment.	Develop integrated employment and skills development services as part of the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES), in partnership with municipalities, employers, trade unions and non-public providers. Those services will be part of a comprehensive activation approach combining employment, social protection and care services, to support in particular women's labour market participation. Provide targeted outreach, upskilling and integrated case management to support women, new entrants' beneficiaries and young people's transition to stable employment. Provide specific support to marginalised women in their transition to formal employment in high value economic sectors such as tourism and activation programs for rural women and those laid off from the garment industry. Develop in close coordination with the national stakeholders, scenarios for effective social protection schemes and extension of	Diversified portfolio of active labour market programmes. Provide support to address both employability and participation barriers of marginalised jobseekers, with a focus on ensuring sustainable activation for NE beneficiaries. Strengthening partnerships for employment and skills at the local level. The transition to sustainable tourism is expected to create green jobs in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable construction, and environmental management. Training and upskilling programs will be provided to equip workers with the necessary skills to thrive in these new roles, fostering job creation and economic resilience. Increased formal enterprises and formal employment and decent work opportunities in the tourism sector. Reduced informal work and enhanced economic opportunities for marginalised groups, including women, in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Developed scenarios for expanding the social security system and providing coverage for seasonal workers and enhanced registration procedures. Identified incentives for formalisation of informal enterprises. Capacity development on Integrated Service Delivery.

Problem Space	Solution Space	Pathways to change
The social insurance scheme only covers 44.0 % of the active population (ILO), which calls for integrated efforts of extension, formalisation and creation of decent work., in particular for seasonal workers. There is a significant mismatch between education and job opportunities, limiting employability and economic growth. In Tourism sector, the share of seasonal workers is estimated to be around 70%, and they face unique challenges, limiting their access to employment protection and social protection. Seasonal workers face multiple challenges, which need to be addressed in order to ensure decent jobs. Seasonal employment results in inconsistent income, making it difficult for workers to plan financially and meet year-round expenses. Many seasonal workers do not participate in the social insurance system, and do not receive social protection benefits, exposing them to economic hardships and uncertainties such as unemployment, disability, illness, lack of adequate protection around childbirth and old age. Seasonal workers often face job insecurity, with no guarantee of employment from season to season.	social insurance to support seasonal workers throughout the year. Develop comprehensive support that will be tailored to activate NE beneficiaries and facilitate workforce entry, focusing on tourism and hospitality. Develop workplace policies to support the integration of women, including measures such as flexible working arrangements, policies to prevent violence and harassment, gender-neutral job vacancies and recruitment processes, curricula to match industries requirements and rural women needs and skills, inclusive hiring policies and management to reduce discrimination, voluntary pay transparency measures, in-business childcare facilities, etc.	Deliver training to local level practitioners on case management, guidance and counselling and placement, and expand the Communities of practices to promote knowledge exchange and collaboration. Integrated Guidelines and Protocols Enhancement. Guidelines and protocols on integrated case management will be improved to meet the specific needs and technical capacity of each municipality, ensuring a tailored approach to integrated service delivery. Developing innovative IT solutions and enhancing protocols for effective integrated case management.

○ Key stakeholders

UNDP will be the lead UN agency for the overall implementation and coordination of the joint programme, with significant implementation support from UNICEF and ILO. Other agencies to provide expertise (not direct recipients) are UN Women - with important impact on the success of the programme. The proposed JP will involve extensive collaboration with various stakeholders, including government bodies at the central and local level, executive agencies, social partners, private sector and development partners to drive transformative change in Albania's social protection and employment sectors. The table provide the name of the stakeholder and the role and contribution to this JP.

Table 3: Joint Programme Stakeholders list

Key stakeholders	Role and contribution
Government stakeholders	
Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MoECI)	MoECI leads the employment, VET and economic policies, and innovation strategies that can drive economic growth. Key roles include implementing relevant reforms, designing policy frameworks (including Law on Employment Promotion and Law on Vocational Education and Training) and managing Chapter 2 in EU accession talks. It drives the implementation of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030, with a focus on consolidation and expansion of employment services for jobseekers and employers alike, provision of inclusive and integrated employment services in partnership with the labour market ecosystem, targeted sustainable transition to the labour market of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), inactive women, and persons with disabilities. Moreover, MoECI is an important actor in policy coordination, having a lead role in the IPMG on Human Capital Development and the Thematic Group on Employment and Skills. The MoECI, together with the MoHSP, will be key stakeholders and will lead the implementation of this initiative. It will engage with the two executive agencies, namely the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) and the National Agency for VET and Qualifications (NAVETQ), to scale up innovative and targeted employment and skills development programmes in the Hospitality and Tourism sector and links to integrated care services and cash benefits. In addition, it will foster partnerships with municipalities, non-public providers and employer to deliver such programmes. The MoECI will also support evidence-based formulation and decision-making in employment formalization in collaboration with social partners, with a focus on identifying the right incentives to retain seasonal workers during the off-season and support innovative social insurance schemes for these workers.
Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP)	The MoHSP leads Albania's social protection and health policies, driving the implementation of the Social Protection Strategy 2024-2030 with a focus on enhancing poverty-targeted cash assistance, supporting persons with disabilities, and integrating local social care services. Key roles include implementing reforms, designing policy frameworks (including the Laws on Social Care Services and Economic Aid), and managing Chapters 19 and 23 in EU accession talks. In the project, MoHSP will facilitate integrated service delivery, support child well-being, and ensure comprehensive and sustainable social protection interventions. The MoHSP has been involved from the beginning in policy mapping, drafting the roadmap and setting the priorities of the proposed intervention. MoHSP participates in the IPMG on Human Capital Development and leads the Thematic Group on Social Protection. Locally, MoHSP will engage local government units to provide direct services, using a multi-stakeholder approach to enable families on cash assistance to access

Key stakeholders	Role and contribution
	child protection, health, social care, education, and links to VET and employment. The MoHSP will support integrating the UCB and LTC models, provide integrated social care services for children and families on economic aid, and promote child well-being and family strengthening. Additionally, jointly with other partners, it will assist young people on economic aid (14-18 years) with integrated services to help them stay in school, develop soft skills, and prepare for further education and employment.
Ministry of Finance (MoF)	The MoF in Albania is responsible for ensuring the financial sustainability, effective implementation, and regulatory support of the proposed social protection and employment initiatives. This involves budgeting, financial planning, policy development, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, fostering public-private partnerships, and providing targeted support to marginalised populations. MoF is crucial for ensuring sustainable financing for social protection and employment interventions, combining domestic and international financial resources. MoF will engage in policy discussions to develop and manage financial plans necessary to sustain the implementation of UCB, social care services and innovative employment programmes, ensuring alignment with national strategies and EU integration goals.
Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE)	Plays a key role in promoting tourism, which is a targeted sector for upskilling and employment opportunities. The JP will leverage the MoTE support on policies that create green jobs in tourism, contributing to the GA goal of generating decent jobs in the green economy. It will play a crucial role in identifying the right incentives for supporting tourism sector formalization and introducing the support mechanisms for business in tourism to register formally and comply with labour standards. The MoTE will also be involved in the process of delivering targeted and integrated employment and skills development programmes to support labour market inclusion of women and youth in rural areas.
National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES)	NAES is the Albanian Public Employment Service (PES) which manages a network of 40 employment offices and administers 29 VET providers. As prioritized by the GoA, the agency, in close cooperation with SSS, is working to support the transition from passive to active schemes of economic aid beneficiaries. In addition, NAES handles the administration of the Employment Management Information System (EMIS) that supports the delivery and documentation of employment services and active labour market programmes. In this JP, NAES will support in identifying the employability profiles of the NE beneficiaries and refer them to integrated programmes delivered in partnership with other labour market programmes, i.e. Community Employment and Training Programme, Basic Literacy, Number and Digital Skills, Traineeship programme. It will also be engaged in enhancing its service delivery in the provision of career counselling, job placement and post-placement support for marginalised workers, including women laid off from the garment industry. In addition, it will promote decent employment opportunities by providing integrated services to reduce decent work deficits and inclusive hiring policies and practices. Finally, it will enhance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the effectiveness of employment and skills development

Key stakeholders	Role and contribution
	programmes, ensuring continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making.
National Agency for VET and qualifications (NAVETQ)	The NAVETQ will play a crucial role in the project by contributing to developing/updating vocational training standards and tailored curricula, particularly in response to the priority to focus on tourism and hospitality, ensuring coherence with the current programmes, quality and relevance of VET programs. NAVETQ will contribute to the training activities for VET instructors, collaborate with employers to identify skills gaps and create targeted programs for marginalised groups, including families on economic aid and women laid off from the garment industry. Additionally, NAVETQ will integrate VET with social protection and inclusion initiatives and establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate programme effectiveness, ultimately contributing to enhancing employability and promoting greater social and economic inclusion.
State Social Services (SSS)	The SSS, as a key agency for monitoring social care service delivery and supporting the implementation of cash assistance in Albania, will play a crucial role in the project. The agency operates through its network of Social Care Institutions and Regional Directorates to ensure effective delivery of services. SSS will be a key partner for the reintegration efforts of the project, jointly with NAES. Key responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of cash assistance and social care service delivery, with a particular focus on new models of LTC. Additionally, the SSS handles the administration of electronic registers for cash assistance (MIS NE) and social care (NERSCS), supports local governments in drafting their Local Social Plans, and ensures compliance with national standards for services. SSS will support the process of drafting of the LTC standard as general principles that serve to ensure the quality of social services. SSS will define a common level of functioning and activity performance that is required to be achieved by all types of LTC services.
Health Operator	The Operator of Health Services is the main implementing agency of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in areas of primary health care and overseeing the home visit programme for families. It operates through its regional offices and serves as the main coordination structure with the health clinics at the local level.
Social Insurance Institute (SII)	The SII administers and manages the social insurance programmes, including pensions, health insurance and maternity benefits. It manages reforms which aim to allocate benefits related to old age, temporary incapacity to work, maternity, work accidents and occupations diseases as well as supplementary benefits at the moment of entitlement and need. The JP will work with the SII towards exploring ways to extend social insurance coverage to those currently excluded, with a focus on seasonal workers.
State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate (SLSSI)	SLSSI is in charge of ensuring compliance with the legal provisions on working conditions of employees, duration of work, salaries, insurance, hygiene, welfare, employment of minors, juveniles, women, occupational health and safety (OSH) conditions in workplaces and other labour related issues.
General Taxation Directorate (GTD)	GTD in Albania is responsible for the efficient and effective collection of tax revenues, ensuring compliance with tax legislation to fund the state budget. It provides services to taxpayers to help them fulfil their tax obligations and

Key stakeholders	Role and contribution
	supports the government in developing tax policies based on periodic information and analysis. The JP will engage with GTD to explore approaches which support businesses on tax obligations and benefits, promoting voluntary compliance, and implement electronic tax filing systems and other digital solutions to streamline tax processes.
Municipalities	Municipalities are essential partners for implementing and coordinating social protection and reintegration services at the community level. They are primarily responsible for planning and delivering social care services, implementing the cash programmes and addressing the local social cohesion priorities. In this JP, the selected 2 municipalities will be involved in engaging with local communities to identify their needs and priorities, ensuring that programmes and services are responsive and tailored to the specific context of each community. They will also be exposed to new models of LTC delivery.
National Labour Council	The National Labour Council is the highest body of tripartite social dialogue at the national level, composed of representatives of the Government, workers and employers. It discusses all reforms related to the socio-economic sphere.
Workers organisations	They play a key role in voicing and advocating for the interests and needs of workers in policy making processes to ensure decent jobs, social protection and employment protection. In this JP, social partners are involved in working with employers to promote decent working conditions, including hiring practices and gender equality in the workplace.
Employers Organisations	Similarly to the workers' organisations, they play a key role in voicing and advocating for the interest and concerns of employers. They represent businesses and industries that can provide employment opportunities and support skill development, particularly in tourism and hospitality. They are key partners in creating job opportunities and participating in upskilling initiatives for marginalised populations.
Public and non-public providers	This can include private companies, NGOs, social enterprises that are involved in provision of employment, skills development and care services. Collectively and in partnership with public providers, can offer targeted outreach programmes, which combine a package of services and measures, tailored to the multiplicity of needs of the groups at risk of social exclusion and long-term unemployment, particularly women and youth. They will support the JP to scale up innovative approaches and reach out to people residing in locations distant from rural areas or in locations distant from employment opportunities. The JP will foster partnerships with public and private sector entities to leverage resources and expertise for the effective implementation of employment and social protection initiatives. Collaborate with social partners and stakeholders to ensure coherence and complementarity in the delivery of services.
Frontline professions in social care service delivery and employment services (public and non-public)	Employment counsellors, social workers, caregivers, and healthcare providers are directly involved in delivering employment and care services, essential for improving the quality and outreach of social protection and employment services.

Key stakeholders	Role and contribution
CSOs	This JP recognizes the crucial role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in fostering inclusive and sustainable development. To ensure comprehensive stakeholder engagement, we will actively involve key CSOs, particularly those representing marginalized communities, throughout the programme's implementation. These organizations will provide essential insights and advocacy to address the needs and rights of marginalised groups effectively.
Other stakeholders	
Volunteers	Individuals who will contribute their time, skills, and resources to support community initiatives and efforts, playing a crucial role in implementing and sustaining joint programme interventions.
Development partners – co-financing areas addressed through this JP	
European Union Delegation (EUD)	The European Union Delegation plays a pivotal role in the policy reforms and supporting development initiatives in Albania, particularly in the context of the country's EU pre-accession process. A key focus is also on social inclusion and employment, where the EU has been increasing its financial support to the sector, through dedicated budget support programmes, assistance and grants. In addition, the tributes to promoting HR and gender equality agenda, a significant aspect negotiated during the accession process. The delegation works closely with Albanian authorities to ensure the implementation of the key sectorial strategies, with a specific emphasis on Chapters 19, 20, 22, and 23, which address HR, gender equality and employment and social policy. Finally, EUD provides guidance, technical assistance, and funding to help Albania align its policies with EU standards, fostering social inclusion, gender equality, and overall socio-economic development. The JP will coordinate closely with the relevant EU funded projects in the sector to ensure greater coherence in the support provided to Albania.
World Bank (WB)	The World Bank Group program in Albania is guided by the Country Partnership Framework (CPF), which was approved on March 16, 2023. This strategy supports greener and more resilient and inclusive growth for the Albanian people and provides analysis, advice, and financing in support of equitable growth in Albania and integration into the EU. Discussions with WB in Tirana started from the inception of the programme and helped to focus the programme on the results and activities proposed here. WB has been actively engaged in supporting the government to reform the Social Assistance programme. More recently, the WB has also been working on new programmes around childcare policies.
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)	The Swiss Cooperation Programme in Albania for the period 2022-2025 focuses on several key areas to support the country's development. These areas include economic development, vocational training, urban infrastructure, energy efficiency, healthcare, and social inclusion. Its most relevant programmes on social protection and employment focus on supporting reforms at the macro level, by supporting the Albanian VET and employment promotion systems to contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic and social development in the country; and at the meso and local level by strengthening executive agencies and providers to deliver labour market relevant skills development and employment services.

3. Programme strategy and theory of change

The overall objective of the action is to develop An inclusive and responsive social protection system in Albania that provides support throughout individuals' lifecycle. The approach identifies a need for support systems strong enough to address barriers categorically for women, youth, and the marginalised. Whereas the contribution to the economy has been significant, the tourism sector in Albania still faces multiple systemic challenges coupled with the demographic crisis and migration. There are still disparities in the reduction of poverty efforts, given that the rates are higher for children. Long-term poverty also features high levels of unemployment, especially among women and the youth. The scarcity of services in long-term care, especially in rural areas, also limits the labour force participation of women. The intervention will focus on strengthening the social protection system, integrated family support, better social care service, and quicker labour market activation for the most marginalised. Among the key measures, there will be included measures on UCB, measures on the supporting and professional care occupations, the enhancement of LTC services, measures, as well as on targeted employment and skills development interventions. Efforts will thus strive to introduce more action within the described intervention to better orient the labour market economic aid beneficiaries, particularly hospitality and tourism sectors, about skills and opportunities to gain decent employment. Above all, such interventions would advance development objectives in Albania, while the innovative models in selected municipalities will give nationwide changes their due.

3.1. Systemic Theory of Change

The JP aims to develop an inclusive and responsive social protection system in Albania that provides lifecycle support to individuals during transitions between education, training, employment, and care. This model anticipates transformation at the systemic level, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including the government, social partners, and civil society, to achieve sustainable social and economic development. The model focuses on integrating social protection and employment systems to address key barriers and leverage entry points for catalytic impact.

The proposed intervention aims to **develop a responsive, comprehensive and universal social protection system** in Albania, **enhancing, child benefits, integrating family support, and improving social care services while accelerating labour market activation for marginalised groups social insurance coverage and paving the way for decent work and a sustainable growing tourism sector in Albania**. Key interventions include developing Universal Child Benefits through policy adjustments and financial investments and supporting defining and better protecting the professional care occupations. Additionally, the JP will explore innovative paths to include seasonal workers under the social insurance system, supporting the system's sustainability and preventing the suffering of economic hardships and uncertainties for workers in the tourism sector. Overall, the initiative will **enhance the quality and outreach of services**, including long-term care, through knowledge building, demand and **integrated case management**. Furthermore, **targeted employment and skills development programs** will be implemented, **supporting families and young people in economic assistance and piloting innovative local solutions**. These efforts will collectively contribute to Albania's development goals and strategic priorities for the sector, such as hospitality and tourism. Various piloted models in targeted municipalities will serve as catalysts for change, the results of which will be used to finetune the models and replicate them nationwide progressively. Enhancing outreach work and the delivering integrated cross-sectoral services are key drivers behind the proposed actions. The implementation at the local level will be

harmonised, ensuring coherence and complementarity in support of accelerating a just transition through employment and protection for Albania. The two results are mutually supporting the participation of women and youth to the labour market and decent work by offering an integrated package of improved child social protection, care services as well as employability programmes. Improving care services and child benefits promote women's activation; the promotion of employability in the tourism sector is complemented by interventions to improve working conditions and access to social insurance for all workers in the sector.



Reflecting that primary responsibility for the actual delivery of social protection services in Albania is at the municipal level, the joint programme primarily focuses its support at this level (to a core group of two (3) municipalities, plus five (5) additional ones supported/ involved under different actions, in order to provide evidence, distil best working practices and generate knowledge that both fosters national dialogue and supports policy-makers for the scaling-up of national measures that will ultimately result in reforming the social protection system and better links between social protection and jobs.

The programme implementation strategy combines a mix of approaches to deliver the support/ achieve the intended results: (1) policy advice/ technical guidance; (2) Capacity building; (3) Direct demonstration of pilot models; (4) the empowerment of marginalised groups and their civil organizations; (5) knowledge generation/ sharing; (6) national and local advocacy.

Regarding the main instruments (methods) for implementation/ delivery of the programme, the JP interventions primarily avail of technical expertise and know-how of the PUNOs, focusing on the municipal level and its linkage to the national level, aiming at allowing for greater impact and outreach.

Outcome 1 *By the end of the JP, Albania will have extended coverage and an integrated social protection system focusing on child benefits, family support and enhanced quality and outreach of care services.*

Pathway: Social protection and care services for inclusive and equitable support.

- **Problem:** Insufficient social protection system and limited access to quality care services.
- **Solution:** Strengthening social protection systems and expanding access to quality care services.
- **Impact 1:** Extended coverage and integration of the social protection system.
- **Outputs:**
 - **Output 1.1.** Universal Child Benefits: Developed scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits.
 - **Output 1.2.** Integrated care management through improved outreach and intersectionality (Universal Home Visit Programme and support to Long-Term Care).
 - **Output 1.3.** Capacitate the workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men
- **Catalytic interventions:**
 - Developed scenarios and mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits.
 - Improved outreach and integrated care management.
 - Knowledge building for LTC services.
 - Support for professional care occupations.
 - Innovative policy solutions for labour market inclusivity.
- **SDG transitions and targets:**
 - SDG 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
 - SDG 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
 - SDG 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision- making in political, economic and public life
 - SDG 16.6.1: Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)

Outcome 2: *By the end of JP, Albania will have increased employability and access to decent work opportunities for marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, through targeted employment and skills development services.*

Pathway: Enhancing formal employment, skill development, and inclusion for women, youth, and marginalized communities.

- **Problem:** Limited access and typology of activation services and inadequate capacities of service providers at the local level to address women and youth participation and employability barriers, integration of marginalised communities, informal and seasonal employment, and skills mismatch.

- **Solution:** Promoting formal employment and skill development; reducing gender disparities and long-term unemployment.
- **Impact 2:** Facilitated access to decent employment opportunities and gender equality.
- **Outputs:**
 - **Output 2.1.** Integrated Employment and Skills Development Services delivered in partnership with targeted two municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, [ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment](#).
 - **Output 2.2.** Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector
 - **Output 2.3.** Integrated Case Management in three municipalities/regions for activating, social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.
- **Catalytic interventions:**
 - Integrated employment and skills development services and programmes.
 - Services to retain decent jobs and formalize enterprises.
 - Targeted outreach and integrated case management.
 - Support systems for labour market activation of NE beneficiaries.
 - Targeted support and reintegration programs for marginalised women workers, including those laid off from the garment industry.
 - Vocational training, career counselling, and job placement for women.
 - Flexible working arrangements and inclusive hiring policies.
- **SDG transitions and targets:**
 - SDG 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.
 - SDG 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.
 - SDG 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
 - SDG 16.6.1: Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)

The Theory of Change is anchored in the CF, addressing two main CF outcomes:

- A. **Human Capital Development & Social Inclusion:** By 2026, there will be increased and more equitable investment in people, focusing on removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion. This is achieved through strengthened social protection systems that enhance the coverage, quality, and monitoring of social protection benefits and social care services, as well as affordable housing for vulnerable groups.
- B. **Sustainable, Resilient, and Green Economic Growth:** By 2026, innovative and integrated policy solutions will accelerate sustainable, productive, and inclusive economic development. This includes enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transitioning to a green and blue economy. The focus will be on increasing the capacities of government institutions to address

skills mismatches and improve labour force participation and decent work, particularly for young people, vulnerable groups, and the long-term unemployed.

The JP directly support the CF's outcomes by extending social protection coverage, enhancing care services, and promoting inclusive employment opportunities, thereby contributing to a more equitable and resilient society.

- **Key Assumptions**

Government support. The government is committed to implementing and supporting proposed policies. Policy adjustments and financial investments will be approved and allocated as planned. Successful cooperation between central and regional/local actors to ensure alignment with national policies and standards.

EU Accession. Continuity of the EU accession process will be important to maintain the level of engagement in institutional reforms

Stakeholder engagement. Key stakeholders, including public institutions, private sector partners, social partners and civil society organizations, are willing to collaborate and actively participate in the interventions. There is effective coordination and communication among all stakeholders involved in the implementation.

Willingness and commitment of targeted municipalities to participate and invest in the establishment of new service models. Availability of qualified personnel to manage and deliver the services.

Adequate funding. Sufficient financial, human, and technical resources are available to develop and implement the interventions beyond the JP. Funding from public, private, and international sources is secured to establish and sustain the proposed models of services and programs.

Capacity and capability. Public officials, social care workers, and labour market actors have sufficient capacity and capability to participate in training programs and implement new service models. Educational institutions and training providers can develop and deliver relevant and effective upskilling and vocational training programs.

Cultural and social acceptance. Targeted communities, families, and individuals, especially long-term unemployed and women in rural areas, are willing to participate in and accept the proposed interventions. There is social and cultural acceptance of formalized employment and social protection measures.

Economic and political stability. The economic and political environment remains stable, allowing for the uninterrupted implementation of interventions. Upcoming elections and external economic or political shocks do not adversely impact the funding and execution of programs.

Behavioural changes. Beneficiaries, including women, rural residents, and seasonal workers, are motivated to participate in upskilling and formal employment programs. Employers are willing to adopt and implement policies supporting decent work and formal employment.

3.2. Description of the Transformative impact

Table 4. Systemic change and anticipated scenarios

Systemic change	Anticipated scenarios
New or increased resource flows	Establishment of sustainable funding streams and increased resource allocation for social protection and employment initiatives. A pipeline of projects ready for financing, ensuring continuous improvement and expansion of services (activation measure, UCB, LTC, integrated service delivery).
Norms/purpose/policy/goals	Shifted societal norms prioritizing inclusive growth, gender equality, and comprehensive social protection. Clearly defined and cohesive national policies aligned with these goals, reflecting a unified strategy across government agencies.
Legislative/regulatory and institutional framework	Strengthened legislative and regulatory frameworks that facilitate inclusive social protection and employment systems. Enhanced institutional capacities and responsiveness to emerging needs, ensuring long-term sustainability of reforms.
Behaviour (new or stronger incentives)	Implementation of new incentives to promote decent work and inclusive hiring practices. Behavioural changes among employers and employees, reducing informal work and promoting equitable workforce participation. Inclusive language used by the JP to ensure that both men and women, as well as other beneficiaries, are represented equally in visuals, examples, and narratives.
KPIs/Performance of the system	Improved performance metrics for service delivery, including coverage, quality, and efficiency of social protection and employment services. Regular monitoring and evaluation processes established, enabling continuous improvement and accountability.
Relationships/partnerships	Strengthened existing partnerships and formation of new alliances with private sector actors, social partners, civil society organizations, and international partners. Enhanced collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, leading to a more integrated and holistic approach to delivering social protection and employment services.
Implementation arrangements	Re/designed implementation frameworks to improve efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and access to services. Equitable distribution of resources and a shift in power dynamics, ensuring that marginalized groups have a stronger voice and representation in decision-making processes.

- ***The change in the lives and livelihoods of the relevant LNOB groups***

Changes in lives and livelihoods of LNOB groups

- ✓ Reduction in poverty rates among children, women, and marginalised groups.
- ✓ Increased labour market participation and employment rates for women, youth, and those from marginalised backgrounds.
- ✓ Enhanced access to quality healthcare and social services, particularly in rural areas.
- ✓ Improved educational outcomes and skill levels among young people and adults, leading to better job opportunities.

● Progress on key SDG targets

Progress on key SDG targets:

- SDG 1 (No Poverty): Substantial reduction in poverty levels through comprehensive and universal social protection measures.
- SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing): Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.
- SDG 4 (Quality Education): Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Achievements in gender equality in employment and social protection.
- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Increased employment and improved working conditions.
- SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions): Government is able to spend what it intends in the field of employment and social protection.

● Dimensions of transformative change

On the basis of the “end game”, the table below describes the overall impact of this JP through the five dimensions of transformative change.

Table 5. **Transformative change**

Key pillars of transformative change	Key elements of the joint programme demonstrating transformative change
Integration	- Holistic approach integrating social protection, employment, and care services, to provide comprehensive support, through enhanced tools, guidelines, IT systems and capacities of professionals, aiming to support SDG transitions on Decent Jobs and universal social protection and digital transformation. - Coordinated policy and regulatory frameworks aligning with national development goals and SDG targets. - Development of cross-sectoral partnerships to enhance service delivery and policy coherence. Strengthening collaborations between relevant ministries,

	local governments, public and non-public providers, and social partners to ensure cohesive service delivery. - Targeted upskilling and placement of women in rural areas reduced divides between urban and rural areas.
Scale	- Expansion of social protection through introduction of UCB and integrated care management for a target of 86,000 children throughout the country - Increase in coverage and accessibility of LTC services in both urban and rural areas. - Develop partnerships among municipalities, public employment services, VET providers and employers to deliver tailored support particularly for at least the 27,000 marginalised groups beneficiaries of social assistance registered with the Public Employment Services. - Deliver capacity building at scale reaching to professionals in key municipalities. - Deployment of mobile units and digital tools to ensure timely delivery of services, and to address urban and rural divide. - Leverage an addition of 26,500,000 (1:12) finances for scaling up the tested programmes from the national and EU anticipated budgets.
Speed	- Effective joint programme management structure and mechanism are established in the short run due to existing working relationship among agencies. - Close relationship of the PUNOs with the key ministries and agencies which are relevant to this JP. - Accelerated implementation of key interventions through streamlined processes and enhanced capacity. - Rapid response to emerging needs and challenges, particularly in times of crisis.
Sustainability	- Establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms for social protection initiatives, including UCB and LTC. - Institutional strengthening and capacity building to maintain and enhance service delivery. - Delivery of enhanced models of integrated employment and skills development support, through national ownership and financing. - Advancement in Albania's EU pre-accession and integration with EU systems.
Local context-specific	- Tailored interventions addressing the specific socio-economic needs of different regions and communities. - Inclusion of local stakeholders in planning and implementation to ensure relevance and effectiveness. - Utilization of local knowledge and resources to adapt and implement best practices and new service models and approaches.

3.3. Joint programme results

Table 6. JP results, Outcome 1

Outcome 1: <i>By the end of the JP, Albania will have extended coverage and an integrated social protection system focusing on child benefits, family support, and enhanced quality and outreach of care services.</i>	
Output 1.1: Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.	
Transformative Result 1: Extended coverage and integration of social protection system	Develop and implement policy adjustments and financial investments to operationalize UBC. Create tools such as guidelines and protocols to strengthen coordination among social administrators, care staff, and health personnel, and conduct awareness campaigns to promote child wellbeing.
Coherence and inter-dependence	This output lays the groundwork for a robust social protection system by ensuring that children receive the financial support they need, directly impacting child poverty rates and family stability.
Synergies and trade-offs	Aligns with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). The initial resource allocation might impact the immediate funding for other areas, but the long-term benefits include improved child well-being and reduced poverty.
Output 1.2. Integrated care management through improved gender sensitive outreach and intersectionality (Universal Home Visit Programme and support to Long-Term Care).	
Description	Enhance the Universal Home Visit Programme and integrate social care services with healthcare, focusing on children and families receiving economic aid. Conduct joint assessments to understand LTC needs and gaps in both public and private sectors.
Coherence and inter-dependence	This output ensures comprehensive care for marginalised groups, improving health and social outcomes through coordinated service delivery.
Synergies and trade-offs	Supports SDG 3 and 16. The full implementation of such comprehensive LTC framework and services may require substantial initial investment, but it will lead to more efficient and effective care services in the long run. However, this initiative contributes to some of the elements of the framework, which is benefiting from the support of other partners also. Setting up adequate, accessible and quality services is a longer-term goal and investment of the GoA.
Output 1.3. Capacitate the workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men	
Description	Enhance the capabilities of the workforce involved in delivering innovative social care service models. This includes training and equipping personnel for mobile units, expanding outreach efforts, providing home care assistance, and integrating health and social care services. Additionally, focus on caregivers in LTC and effective use of the electronic register on social care. Develop and implement gender-responsive policy solutions aimed at improving labour market inclusivity and the quality of social care services, through partnerships among NAES, private employment

	agencies and/or skills providers, creating integrated pathways for service delivery
Coherence and inter-dependence	This output is essential for enhancing the overall quality and reach of long-term care services. By capacitating the workforce, the programme ensures that social care services are delivered efficiently and effectively, leading to better health and social outcomes for marginalised populations. The data and insights gained from these initiatives will inform strategic decision-making and policy development, thereby strengthening the social protection system.
Synergies and trade-offs	Enhances service delivery quality (SDG 3 and SDG16) as it aims to improve the quality and accessibility of care services. While the investment in workforce training and system enhancements may require significant time and resources upfront, these efforts will result in long-term benefits. Improved service delivery and informed policy decisions will ultimately lead to sustainable and high-quality social care systems, outweighing the initial delays in immediate service enhancements.

Table 7. JP results, outcome 2

Transformative Result 2: Facilitated access to decent employment opportunities and gender equality	
Outcome 2: <i>By the end of JP, Albania will have increased employability and access to decent work opportunities for marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, through targeted employment and skills development services.</i>	
Output 2.1: Integrated Employment and Skills Development Services delivered in partnership with targeted municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment.	
Description	Implement targeted employment and skills development programs in partnership with municipalities, non-public providers, and employers, specifically focusing on the tourism and hospitality sectors. These programs aim to enhance the technical, soft, and basic skills of youth, of women (including those laid off from the garment industry). Programmes such as Community Employment and Training, basic Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills, as well as Traineeship will support the labour market transition of long-term unemployed, low-skilled individuals, and jobseekers in remote areas. The goal is to bridge the skills gap and improve employability in higher-value added sectors. By integrating environmental considerations, the JP aims to create a more resilient and diversified tourism sector. Sustainable tourism practices are expected to attract a higher number of environmentally conscious tourists, thereby increasing demand for local services and creating new employment opportunities in both direct and ancillary sectors . Specific support for marginalised women workers, including those laid off from the garment industry, includes apprenticeships, vocational training, career counselling, and job placement services.

	Additionally, mobile employment and skills development services will be provided to activate and reintegrate women residing in rural or distant locations. Engaging local communities and raising awareness about the importance of environmental sustainability is crucial. The JP will facilitate community-led initiatives that promote sustainable tourism, ensuring that local populations benefit from tourism development while preserving their environment . The program will also focus on pupils from NE (economic assistance) households aged 14-18 who are at risk of dropping out, providing them with soft skills training and career advice to transition them into job opportunities. Child and safety measures will be introduced to prevent exploitation, particularly related to seasonal work. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning mechanisms will be enhanced to ensure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of these programs.
Coherence and inter-dependence	This output directly enhances employability by aligning educational and vocational training with labour market needs. By focusing on high-demand sectors such as tourism and hospitality, the program ensures that training is relevant and targeted, leading to better job placement outcomes. This output facilitates the labour market participation of new entrants such as youth, women, including after a period of labour interruption, and long-term unemployed or inactivity.
Synergies and trade-offs	Supports SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Initial focus on a specific leave other sectors less attended, but successful models can be expanded. Implementation of inclusive practices and transitioning to flexible work arrangements might require changes in corporate cultures and practices, but long-term benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce are substantial.
Output 2.2.Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector.	
Description	Based on the available information, international best practices and experience in neighbouring countries, explore interventions/incentives to ensure women's access to comprehensive resources and support. Identify and support workplace policies towards the integration of women, such as flexible working arrangements, policies to prevent violence and harassment, gender-neutral job vacancies and recruitment processes, inclusive hiring policies and management to reduce discrimination, and voluntary pay transparency measures. Develop incentives to formalise enterprises in the tourism sector, including own-account workers and test them in targeted municipalities., in coordination with the sectoral Employers' and Workers' organizations The extension of social insurance coverage in Albania's tourism sector aims to provide financial stability and benefits to seasonal workers who

	often lack adequate social protection. This initiative targets the high informality and income instability prevalent in the sector, ensuring that workers have access to essential social security. By integrating social insurance schemes and innovative ICT solutions, the intervention seeks to enhance job security and overall of decent work for these workers.
Coherence and inter-dependence	This output ensures job security and formal employment, promoting economic stability. It also addresses gender disparities by enhancing women's economic empowerment and workforce participation and ensures equitable treatment fostering an inclusive work environment. In addition, this output contributes to improving work-life balance, making it easier for diverse groups to participate in the workforce. The initiative's coherence is also rooted in its alignment with broader efforts to formalize the tourism sector and improve working conditions. The inter-dependence between extending social insurance and formalizing employment practices is crucial, as providing social security benefits encourages workers and businesses to move towards formal operations. Additionally, the success of social insurance schemes relies on effective collaboration with regulatory bodies, industry stakeholders, and local communities to ensure comprehensive coverage and compliance.
Synergies and trade-offs	Supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Encouraging formalization might face initial resistance, but overall stability and worker benefits will enhance economic resilience. The extension of social insurance creates synergies by promoting a more resilient and equitable tourism sector, enhancing both worker welfare and business stability. It supports economic growth by reducing income volatility and improving worker satisfaction, which can lead to higher productivity and retention rates. However, trade-offs include the initial costs and administrative burden of implementing these schemes, as well as the potential resistance from businesses and workers who are accustomed to informal practices. Despite these challenges, the long-term benefits of enhanced social protection and economic stability are anticipated to outweigh the initial difficulties.
Output 2.3. Integrated Case Management in 2 municipalities/regions for activating social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.	
Description	Facilitate access to integrated services for children and families in cash assistance, combining outreach with evidence-based case management. Enhance IT systems and train public officials and labour market actors to improve integrated case management for NE beneficiaries, combining cash and care services with employment and skills development programmes, integrating EMIS with NERSCS. Consolidate and expand communities of practices among public officials and labour market actors to improve integrated case management for NE beneficiaries, combining cash and care services with employment and skills development programmes, with a focus on integrated case management, guidance

	and counselling, mediation and placement.
Coherence and inter-dependence	This output reduces long-term unemployment and improves employability through comprehensive support.
Synergies and trade-offs	Contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Focusing resources on youth employment and NE beneficiaries might temporarily divert attention from other age groups, but long-term benefits justify this focus.

- **Leveraging of funding and financing**

Table 8. JP financial commitments

Source of financial leverage	Description	Amount (USD)	Anticipated /committed
Co-funding			
1.UNDP	Cash: Contribution to develop and implement new innovative LTC models and conduct an assessment of both demand and supply of LTC in some selected municipalities. In-kind: Programmatic support and coordination among other PUNOs	90,000 70,000	Committed
2.UNICEF	In-kind: Contribution through the staff supporting the implementation of the interventions	143,365	Committed
3.ILO	In-Kind: Gather good practices in the EU member states and neighbouring countries on: 1) incentives for the formalisation of enterprises in the tourism sector; 2) social insurance extension in sectors characterised by seasonal work; 3) Develop a brief on Decent work in the tourism sector	50,000	Committed
Total		353,365	
Co-financing			
MoECI – National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2023-2030 (state budget)	The key relevant measures are: 1. Delivering training and employment promotion programmes and services in partnership with labour market actors 2. Enhance women’s inclusion in the labour market	annually 6,000,000 (2025) 6,000,000 (2026)	Anticipated

MoHSP – National Social Protection Strategy 2024-2030 (state budget_	The key relevant measures are: 1. Provision of Long-Term Care 2. Development of new models of social services, integrated and accessible, in response of local social plans and dynamics in vulnerabilities, 3. Promotion of these service models; 4. Promoting partnership with civil society organizations.	5,900,000	Anticipated
MoHSP – National Social Protection Strategy 2024-2030 (state budget	Support to universal child benefit (0-10 y.o)	annually 3,300,000 (2025) 3,300,000 (2026)	Anticipated
EU for Employment and Social Inclusion	TA supporting the MoHSP and MECI on aspects related to social care services, employment and inclusive education. It will be engaged to support the MoHSP in developing a regulatory framework of the LTC and the actions proposed by the JP on LTC have been identified jointly with the MoHSP as priority for complementing the support for the LTC.	2,000,000	Anticipated
Total		26,500,000	

3.4. LNOB framework and Human Rights Mechanisms

The LEAP Albania Joint Programme is designed to address the multifaceted barriers faced by marginalized groups, ensuring that no one is left behind. By incorporating the insights from the CCA and aligning our efforts with the CF, this JP aims to create a more inclusive and equitable society in Albania, contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. The analysis of these marginalized groups is grounded in the findings of the CCA, which provides a comprehensive overview of the socio-economic challenges in Albania. This JP addresses some of the recommendations provided by the CEDAW and CRC committees in 2023.

Table 9. Target groups and links with HR mechanisms, CCA and UNCT priorities

Main groups targeted	Human Rights Mechanisms	Links with CCA and UNCT priorities
Women and girls – facing gender discrimination, employment barriers, higher poverty rates Gender-based exclusion remains a reality for many women and girls in Albania, exacerbated by insufficient childcare and eldercare services, high rates of unemployment, and limited access to decent work opportunities, particularly in rural areas. The CCA highlights the persistent gender inequality in Albania, noting that women, especially in rural areas, face significant barriers to education, employment, and healthcare services.	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); CEDAW Recommendation: Intensify efforts to promote women's economic empowerment through increased access to employment and vocational training, especially in rural areas. ILO Convention 100 on equal pay for work of equal value, ILO Convention 111 on non-discrimination, ILO Convention 183 on maternity protection, ILO Convention 156 on workers with family responsibilities, and ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations on gender equality. Strengthen social protection systems to ensure they effectively address the needs of marginalised populations, including women, children, and persons with disabilities. This includes enhancing the coverage and adequacy of social assistance programs and integrating social protection with employment policies (UPR/ALB/CO/3-4, Paragraph 62).	CCA and UNCT Priorities: Promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The CF aims to enhance gender equality by improving women's access to social protection, employment, and leadership opportunities, aligning with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). JP contribution: Empower women economically, reduce gender disparities, and support CEDAW and UPR recommendations. Ensure decent working conditions for women and tackle gender-based discrimination and violence and harassment in the world of work
Children and youth – facing higher poverty rates, youth unemployment, risk of school dropout.	Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); It called upon Albania to review its social protection model and consider aligning the information	CCA and UNCT Priorities: Improve child welfare and youth employment opportunities. The CF focuses on enhancing education and employment opportunities for youth,

Many young people are at risk of dropping out of school and facing unemployment due to a lack of relevant skills and training opportunities. This is further complicated by high levels of informal employment and inadequate education systems. The CCA identifies youth unemployment as a critical issue, with nearly one in four young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET).	management systems related to health, education, and social protection, increase the budget allocations for children in the health and social sectors, and ensure access to quality community-based social services. UPR recommendations on child protection. CRC Concluding observations 2023 Enhance the protection and welfare of children by addressing child poverty, improving access to quality education, and ensuring that social protection systems are inclusive of all children, particularly those from marginalized communities (CRC/C/ALB/CO/5-6, Paragraph 40).	supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). JP contribution: Reduce child poverty, improve education outcomes, support CRC and UPR recommendations. Concerned about the specific budget allocations for advancing children's rights and recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights. CRC Recommendation: Enhance the protection and welfare of children by reducing child poverty and improving access to quality education.
Elderly – faced with Insufficient long-term care services, social isolation.	UPR recommendations on social protection for older persons: Strengthen the social protection system to ensure it adequately covers the needs of older persons, including access to pensions, healthcare, and social services. Improve the accessibility of social services for older persons, particularly in rural and remote areas. Promote measures that support the independent living of older persons, including home care and community-based services.	CCA and UNCT Priorities: Improve care services and social protection for the elderly. JP Contribution: Improve care services and social inclusion for elderly persons. The JP will enhance social protection coverage for older persons by integrating long-term care services and improving access to healthcare, ensuring comprehensive support for this marginalised group. The JP will implement mobile units and integrated service delivery models to provide social services to older persons in rural and remote areas, ensuring they receive the support they need.

Rural populations – facing limited access to quality services and employment. Rural residents face limited access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Infrastructure deficits and geographic isolation exacerbate these challenges. The CCA identifies significant disparities between urban and rural areas in terms of access to services and economic opportunities.	UPR recommendations on rural development: Strengthen social protection systems to be inclusive of rural populations, ensuring that social assistance and benefits are accessible to those living in remote areas.	CCA and UNCT Priorities: Enhance rural development and access to services. Focus on addressing rural-urban disparities and enhancing access to services and economic opportunities in rural areas. JP Contribution: Enhance access to services and employment in rural areas.
Marginalised and informal workers	ILO Convention 102 on social security, Recommendation 202 on social protection floors, ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy	CCA and UNCT Priorities: Increase access to quality employment, reduce informality, and raise the labour force participation of women, young people and marginalised groups. JP Contribution: Provide integrated services to reduce decent work deficits and expand social security in the tourism sector

- **Contribution to gender inequalities, Human Rights, and peace building**

The JP will make a transformative contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment by implementing gender-responsive policies and practices, providing targeted support for women's employment and education, and enhancing access to social protection and care services. Aligned with international human rights standards and mechanisms, the JP ensures inclusive social protection measures, promotes access to education, employment, and healthcare for all, and addresses the specific needs of marginalised and marginalised groups. Although this is not its primary objective, the JP will also contribute to peacebuilding and prevention, as it reduces inequalities, enhances social cohesion, and empowers marginalised groups, reducing potential sources of conflict. In this manner, the JP is consecrated to realise a just, fair, and peaceful society through these joint efforts.

- **Participation of rightsholders in the JP**

The JP's focus on an intersectional approach and alignment with human rights mechanisms ensures that marginalized and marginalised groups directly benefit from its interventions. By addressing the unique challenges faced by these groups and involving them meaningfully in the implementation process, the JP will contribute to achieving gender equality, human rights, and, where applicable, peacebuilding and prevention. Through sustainable community engagement, financial support, and institutional capacity building, the JP aims to create lasting positive impacts on Albania's social protection and employment systems.

It is the involvement of the right holders, the marginalized, and the marginalised groups that are the cornerstones of JP to ensure planning sufficiently covers their needs and perspectives. This will be an active approach from the planning stages to ensure their needs are well articulated and captured. This includes setting up feedback mechanisms to gather input from rightsholders and ensure continuous adjustment continuously. The capacity building of such people under the JP, on the other hand, would empower them to fully participate in the decision-making process. Representation from different marginalized groups will also be included in the JP Governance structures, such as the Joint Programme Steering Committee, in executing the devolution program, to ensure equity and inclusiveness.

- **Groups specifically benefitting from any given output**

Table 10. **Groups benefitting from outputs**

List of marginalized and vulnerable groups ⁵	Dedicated Output
Women and girls	Output 1.2., 1.4., 2.1; 2.2., 2.3.
Children	Output 1.1., 1.2. 1.3; 2.1
Vulnerable and informal workers	Output 2.2
Youth	Output 1.2., 1.4., 2.1., 2.2. and 2.3
Rural population	Output 1.2. 1.3 and 2.1.
Older persons	Output 1.2. and 1.3

3.5. Sustainability plan and exit strategy

The sustainability plan and exit strategy of the JP ensure that the expectation is upheld, maintained, and developed further than what the timeline envisaged. The sustainability plan is effectively hinged on three principal areas: community, financial, and institutional sustainability. Without doubt, the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders are crucial in maintaining and building upon what the JPs have achieved: government, social partners, civil society, donors, and implementing partners.

1. Community sustainability. The JP has involved local communities in the planning and implementing actions, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability of the outputs. Moreover, continuous engagement with targeted communities will further mainstream local stakeholders in the decision-making process so that their needs are most effectively addressed. The block of activities focusing on various training and capacity-strengthening programs for local organisations and beneficiaries will help ensure they have the skills and knowledge to maintain and develop further the results achieved through this JP and adapt them independently to the changing needs and local contexts. These activities include

⁵ The other marginalized and vulnerable groups include, amongst other, minorities (incl. Ethnic, religious, linguistic...), people of African Descent, persons deprived of their liberty, peasants and rural workers, human rights defenders (incl. NGOs, journalists, union leaders, whistleblowers...), migrants, stateless persons, LGBTIQ+ persons (sexual orientation and gender identity), persons living with (HIV/AIDS, leprosy...), persons with albinism, victims or relatives of victims of enforced disappearances, victims of (slavery, torture, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse...). List as per the standard 20 LNOB groups according to the Implementation Guide for the Output Indicator Framework for measuring the United Nations contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals: https://1102656428-files.gitbook.io/~files/v0/b/gitbook-x-prod.appspot.com/o/spaces%2F-MbDdHe_y0zwBb9YTe4W%2Fuploads%2F4114YqYQuOo7qKb5ycyL%2FG%20-%20221031-%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf?alt=media&token=e54c735a-c0a6-4984-8025-2f8b777d1d89.

leadership training, skills development workshops, and peer learning opportunities. Continuous awareness campaigns for the community will be conducted, specifically focusing on access to quality social protection, employment skills and opportunities based on economic sector priorities, and fostering gender equality and women's participation in the labour market. Beyond keeping the community informed, these campaigns will seek greater involvement, contributing to longer-term results and the sustainability of interventions. These campaigns will be run on different media to reach a broader audience.

1.1. Role and responsibilities. The **LGs** would enable continuous community participation in sustainably realising local needs. They will also work with local leaders and organizations to promote the efforts embarked on in the framework of this JP or sectorial reforms.

LGs will help focus better on community needs and assure technical support for capacity-building. **CSOs** will be vital sources for resource mobilization and advocacy of community needs. The **community leaders** will champion a continuation of the JP initiatives with the mobilization of local resources and efforts. They will take the lead (informally) in local action planning and ensure that the community's voices are heard in the policy issues' discourse.

2. Financial sustainability. To ensure the longevity of JP initiatives, exploring modalities to increase funding from national budgets, **private sector partnerships, and international donors** will be a priority.

These will include identifying new funding opportunities directed at the donor's priorities and establishing Public-Private Partnerships to tap private-sector investments for social protection and employment. These partnerships will help maximise the financial resources, and provide technical expertise, and innovative solutions for maintaining and provide financial viability to the programs.

A special focus will be paid to streamlining operations and optimising available resources.

2.1. Roles and responsibilities. Government commitment to ensure national budget resources will be essential to sustain JP initiatives and have international donors on board for complement funding. Modalities will be explored towards innovative financing to ensure the long-term sustainability of JP initiatives.

Close coordination with **donors** implementing relevant programmes in the sector will help maximise the results. In addition, they will share their technical assistance to complement the joint efforts necessary for JP results to be sustainable. Working closely with other donors will help ensure that the resources of national and local stakeholders are provided in a manner that supports the program's intentions.

Private sector will be engaged in PPPs and financially support and contribute to employment and social protection programs through in-kind ways. Private sector partners will contribute to the program with their skills, technologies, and resources to maximise the impact.

3. Institutional sustainability. Mainstream successful JP models and practices into national policies and frameworks to become part of the standard operating procedures. This involves supporting policies that are prioritised in the government's reforms and national strategic framework of the sector and revising/enhancing on going policies and measures already in place to conform to JP gains.

Through the **capacity building activities**, the JP will consolidate the sustainability of JP investments. In addition, efforts will be committed to support robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Continuous evaluation, beyond the JP, will ensure that the programs remain effective and responsive to GoA priorities and community needs.

3.1. Roles and responsibilities. The government operationalises JP practices within national frameworks and ensures that there are mechanisms for continual support. The government will be supported to ensure that enabling policies are in place to sustain the program's outcomes.

Social partners (e.g., Trade Unions and employer associations) are key partners advocating for policy changes. They will provide input to ensure that the JP interventions are aligned with labour market needs and foster a dialogue that involves workers, employers, and policymakers.

Implementation partners will continue to provide technical and capacity-building support even after the completion of the JP. These agencies will continue to ensure that institutions are capable and have acquired the appropriate skills and resources required for continued practice activities from the program.

Transition and Support:

Joint Steering Body and Joint Programme Team. These structures will continue to remain operational for at least three months after the official operational closure of JP to provide advice and facilitate capacity development. They will oversee the handover of responsibilities to local stakeholders and ensure a smooth transition process.

4. Adaptive implementation and Management arrangements

The JP will be implemented through the modality of “Delivering as One”, within the framework of the GoA and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026, by three UN agencies, (UNDP, UNICEF, and ILO) and in close partnership with relevant stakeholders. Other agencies to provide expertise (not direct recipients) are UN Women – with an important impact on the success of the programme. A coordinated, but sufficiently flexible steering mechanism will ensure that activities are effectively aligned. All three agencies have a solid record in collaborating and implementing successful joint UN projects, including Joint SDG Fund programmes.

4.1. Adaptive programme implementation

Table 11. **Back planning process**

Backplanning Implementation Approach		Timeframe																							
Results		2 4	2 3	2 2	2 1	2 0	1 9	1 8	1 7	1 6	1 5	1 4	1 3	1 2	1 1	1 0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	Initial planning and setup																						X	X	X
0.1	Establish governance structures																								
	Define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.																								
	Recruitment of JP team																								
	Form steering and technical committees with representatives from key stakeholders (government, public institutions, civil society, private sector).																								
0.2	Develop detailed workplans:																								
	Detailed workplans aligned with the overall objectives and outcomes of the JP.																								
	Identify key activities, timelines, and responsible parties.																								
	Agree on the target municipalities																								
0.3	Context analysis and validation of the ToC																								
	- Inception research- review current social protection, care services, and employment landscapes.																								
	- Analysed context and validated assumptions of the Theory of Change																								
0.4	Establish dialogue:																								
	- Kick-off event																								
	- Establish dialogue with key stakeholders to ensure readiness for implementation and feasibility of the workplan.																								
Transformative Result 1: Extended coverage and integration of social protection system																									
1.	Outcome 1: By the end of the joint programme, Albania will have an extended coverage and integrated social protection system with a focus on social insurance, child benefits, family support, and enhanced quality and outreach of care services.																								
1.1	Output 1.1: Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.											X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
1.1 .1	Developed scenarios and policy adjustments																								

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

- **Main results anticipated for the first 9 months of the JP implementation**

Table 12. **Results anticipated for the first 9 months of the JP.**

Phased Approach	Key activities	Main Milestones
1.Initial Phase (First 9 Months - "low-hanging fruits")	Outcome 1	
	UNICEF Related output 1.1: -Develop options for the Universal Child Benefit; -Prepare a roadmap and identify the tools and mechanism for its operationalisation; Related output 1.2 & 1.3: - Create tools like guidelines and protocols to strengthen coordination and link better the contributions of different relevant actors (i.e. social administrators, social workers; healthcare providers); - Enhanced training and capacity-building programs for home visits in 2 municipalities - providing support and facilitate access to services to beneficiaries of economic aid. - enhance the effectiveness of the National Electronic Register for Social Care Services (NERSCS) in 2 municipalities	Child Benefit programme fully developed; Draft roadmap for the UCB operationalisation; Initial 200 HH from 3 municipalities, beneficiaries of the economic aid, receiving integrated support from the JP. Coordination tools/guidelines for intersectional service delivery created; 1500 children reached out through home visit Support to the NERSCS personnel training and guidance in 3 targeted municipalities
	UNDP Related output 1.2: -Initiate the implementation of a joint assessment to understand LTC needs, regulatory frameworks, and gaps in the public and private sectors in 3 pilot municipalities. - Design and develop innovative solutions on delivering LTC through civil society organizations, private companies, and other local partner, and initial capacity-building workshops. - Deliver three LTC models in two targeted municipalities, combining care with employment and training opportunities (combing new LTC models with the Community Employment and Training programme) Related to output 1.3: - Design and develop a training curriculum on home-based care professionals in partnership with VET providers, NAVETQ and NAES.	Draft assessment on the LTC conducted. At least three Innovative local solutions for long-term care designed and developed 500 individuals benefit LTC services in two targeted municipalities. 30 NE beneficiaries are employed and trained to deliver LTC services Training curricula developed

	- Deliver the training to 200 professionals at the local level in 2 targeted municipalities.	200 professionals capacitated and certified.
	UNW Related to output 1.3. Establish job placement and career counselling services Design and deliver workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship to empower women caregivers Outreach on training program and dissemination of knowledge products in remote and rural areas	30 caregivers are placed in jobs and are financially empowered 50 women caregivers use financial and entrepreneurship to improve employment opportunities through workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship to empower women caregivers in 3 target municipalities 500 rural women and women living in remote areas in 3 target municipalities have increased access to project products and learning materials and use them to enhance employment opportunities
	Outcome 2	
	UNDP Related to output 2.1. - Jointly with all the other PUNOs, prepare skills development and employment roadmap in the H&T sector for two municipalities in consultation with the H&T Sectoral Skills Committee, employer organisation, chambers, social partners and other local level actors. - Expand the voucher scheme for financing provision of training programmes in the H&T sector in xx municipalities - Support inactive women (NE beneficiaries) through the Traineeship programme, in partnership with VET providers, employers and employer organizations in the H&T sector - Support inactive women (NE beneficiaries) with intensive counselling and placement services, delivered by non-public providers in partnership with employment offices, employers, employer organizations, and municipalities. Related to output 2.3. -Capacity building workshops to scale up the Communities of Practice on integrated service delivery models in two municipalities, among all labour market actors at the local level (employment offices, municipal	Local level employment and skills development roadmap prepared. 100 NE beneficiaries trained and certified 50 NE beneficiaries (low qualified and inactive women) are placed as trainees in vacancies of the H&T sector 80 NE beneficiaries activated and placed in decent jobs 50 frontline staff become part of communities of practices and are capacitated in integrated case

	social services, VET providers, SSS, NGOs, and the private sector) ILO Related to output 2.1. - Provide holistic support to marginalised women and laid-off women from the garment industry which combine career counselling and job placement with apprenticeship and vocational training, delivered in collaboration with employers and employer organisations Related to output 2.2. - Addressing the main drivers of informality in the tourism sector - Identify incentives to formalize enterprises, including own account workers in consultation with employers, employer organization, social partners and MECI. - Deliver and test incentives for enterprise formalization, including own account workers in 2 municipalities. - Based on international best practices, identify social insurance schemes best suited to the Albania national context for seasonal sectors to be tested in the legal, institutional and financial framework. UNICEF - Support to pupils from NE households (age group 14-18) at risk of drop-out, to transition to job opportunities through soft skills training and career advice – starting with 1 municipality UNW - Stakeholder engagement through roundtables and focus groups with representatives of industries of care, hospitality, and tourism sectors (focus on WEPs signatories) as well as rural women and communities to identify skill gaps and future needs and engage with rural women and communities to understand their training needs and aspirations. - Develop and update curricula to match industries requirements, and rural women needs and skills, focusing on digital skills - Activation and reintegration of women in rural areas through Mobile Training Units and Online Learning Platforms - Co-designed training programs and mentorship also work with NGOs and community organisations.	management, guidance and counselling and placement. ILO 50 women enrol in vocational training and get additional support services Road map for Decent work in the tourism sector developed One set of incentives piloted in two municipalities Feasibility test for including high-seasonal workers in social insurance Propose and support mechanisms and procedures in implementation 500 young people in NE are equipped with soft skills training and career advice. At least 100 women in 3 target rural communities understand their training needs and aspirations within the specified timeframe. 1 Program in place and operational 200 rural women outreached through MTUs;
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		200 rural women are trained and mentored;
2. Mid-Term Phase (Expand and deepen program intervention)	Outcome 1 & 2	
	Consolidate and scale up skills development and employment models delivered in partnership with local partners, to diversify the ALMPs portfolio targeting activation of NE beneficiaries. Propose policy adjustments and enhance capacities of professionals and key stakeholders. Introduce specific and measures supporting the proposed interventions. Enhance monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms and capacities. (UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UNW)	Key milestones include the roadmap and costed scenarios for LTC operationalization, policy briefs for child safety measures related to seasonal work and blended financing for social care, a comprehensive review and mid-term evaluation, strengthened monitoring and learning mechanisms, integrated guidelines for local practitioners, and a proposal for expanding the social insurance scheme for seasonal workers.
3. Final Phase (Consolidate and support sustainability)	Support the institutionalization of successful practices, transition of responsibilities to key actors, and final evaluation.	Final assessment of outcomes, handover to local stakeholders, and sustainability planning.

- **Brief description of the roles and responsibilities of key partners.**

Table 13. Roles and responsibilities of key partners.

Key actors	Roles and responsibilities
Resident Coordinator (RC)/Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)	Oversight and strategic guidance. Ensuring alignment with UNCT strategic priorities. Coordination among UN agencies and stakeholders.
PUNOs	Implementation of specific program components. Technical expertise and capacity building. Monitoring and reporting progress.
Government	Policy support and integration of JP results into national frameworks. Resource allocation and sustainability planning. Coordination with local authorities and communities.
Social Partners and Civil Society	Advocacy and mobilization of community support. Implementation of grassroots initiatives. Providing feedback and ensuring accountability.
Other Partners (Donors, Private Sector)	Financial contributions and resource mobilization. Technical support and innovation. Collaboration in public-private partnerships.

- **Alignment and complementarity**

A careful mapping of the ongoing and identified planned support in the sector was carried out to ensure alignment and complementarity of the proposed actions. In addition, the proposed activities were validated with the GoA ensuring a cohesive approach to achieving national development goals. Furthermore, the UN's added

value lies in its convening power, technical expertise, and ability to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration. The implementing PUNOs have established coordination with a number of programmes/ projects being implemented in the sector. One of the relevant programmes is the EU for Social Inclusion (EU4SI), which is implementing measures addressing national priorities in employment and skills and social protection; and where UNDP and UNICEF have started this year implementing two projects (**EU for Social Care and EU for Labour market Inclusion**) of which are funded through the EU4SI programme. One of them is EU for Labour Market Inclusion aiming to strengthen inclusive and active employment and skills models in 19 municipalities (implemented by UNDP), and the project implemented by UNICEF, EU for Social Care, aiming at **strengthening the delivery of social care services** targeting 14 targeted municipalities and ensure that harmonised support is provided to the targeted communities. Another relevant EU funded project is the **EU for Youth**, implemented jointly by UNDP and UNICEF, focusing on supporting national institutions to pilot Youth Guarantee Scheme in three municipalities and prepare for its full deployment throughout Albania. The ILO is also supporting Youth Guarantee national program from a regional perspective in its capacity of EU Technical advisor.

Furthermore, the JP will continue to collaborate closely with the **EU-funded TA implemented by GOPA**, supporting the MoHSP on aspects related to social care services, employment and inclusive education. In addition, this TA will be engaged to support the MoHSP in developing a regulatory framework of the LTC and the actions proposed by the JP on LTC have been identified jointly with the MoHSP as priority for complementing the support for the LTC.

The JP will ensure coordination with the Swiss funded **-UN Leave No One Behind** programme, where UNDP, UNICEF and UNW are implementing partners supporting the strategic framework on social protection and development of the workforce in social care services. The JP will also closely coordinate with the other SDF Fund UNJP on **Digital Agriculture for Rural Transformation (DART)** implemented by ILO, FAO and ITU to harness the potential of digitalization to transform underserved rural areas in Albania, by fostering an agenda for digitalisation, enhancing access to digital services and developing digital skills of small agricultural producers. **Business Partnerships for SDGs** is an ongoing UNJP funded by SIDA where the ILO and UNIDO are the PUNOs providing technical support to garment and footwear companies currently going through difficult crises which have led to G&F business disruptions and numerous laid off workers - the target of skilling and upskilling interventions under GA UNJP. These efforts will be complemented by other efforts implemented by other UN agencies.

Furthermore, **UN agencies** maintain a continuous dialogue with WB, especially related to relevant and planned support in the sector, in particular, related to the social protection sector (on cash programmes), child case management and referral (on care programmes) and reintegration efforts (employment). The JP will further coordinate with other relevant initiatives at the local level, such as with the **EU-funded project- EU for Municipalities and Municipalities for Europe**, which is implemented at the sub-national level supporting local communities through investments in infrastructure and improving public services, aiming at contributing to local economic development and social cohesion. More information on these projects is included in Annex 1.

The JP will continuously seek to establish effective strategies and collaborations with other relevant projects to enhance its overall impact and achieve common goals in the sector.

Besides relying on the formal coordination structures, such as the IMPG on Human Capital Development and the Steering Committee (SC) that will be established for this JP, the PUNOs also maintain a continuous dialogue with all the key stakeholders to ensure coordination and complementarity of implemented strategies. Such an approach would facilitate better information sharing, progress updates, and coordination at the project level on a more frequent basis and not wait for it to happen in the higher-level coordination structures. This will ensure all stakeholders are on the same page, can respond to emerging challenges collectively, and avoid potential overlaps. Moreover, the PUNOs will actively engage in exchanging best practices and lessons learned among the projects to support knowledge sharing and further contribute to improving the JP's outcomes and avoid potential challenges during the implementation.

- **Mainstream convening, learning and capacity development throughout JP implementation**

The JP will mainstream convening, learning, and capacity development throughout its implementation. This will involve regular workshops and seminars to improve stakeholders' understanding of systemic change and promote a transformative outlook through joint planning sessions and collaborative problem-solving. Cultural change will be co-created by establishing shared norms, values, and aspirations through continuous dialogue and feedback. Media engagement, community outreach, and digital presence will ensure that JP's achievements are widely recognised, fostering transparency, accountability, and sustained engagement from all stakeholders. Detailed implementation plans and further specifics are provided in Annex 7.

The JP aims to extend the coverage and integration of social protection systems and facilitate access to decent employment opportunities and promote labour market activation of NE beneficiaries into the hospitality and tourism sectors. Given the scope and objectives the JP, the following two engine room actions have been identified as most relevant:

- Shifting policy and regulatory frameworks** - critical for establishing a robust, inclusive, and sustainable social protection system is critical. This effort is intricately linked with fostering decent work. Through these actions, the JP can create a more cohesive and integrated approach to addressing social protection and employment challenges.
- Capacity building at scale for public institutions and civil society** - ensuring that the changes implemented are sustainable and resilient to shocks and crises. This action supports the long-term success and effectiveness of the programme by empowering those responsible for executing and maintaining the initiatives

The table 14, below, presents the links of the specific outputs with the engine rooms.

Table 14. **Links of the outputs with the engine rooms.**

Outcome 1: Extended Coverage and Integration of Social Protection Systems	
Key activities	Engine room link
Universal Child Benefit: Develop and implement scenarios and operational mechanisms for UCB, create guidelines and protocols for coordination among social administrators, care staff, and health personnel, and conduct awareness campaigns.	Drive shifts across policy and regulatory frameworks to support the implementation of UCB. Develop bankable initiatives for child benefits and establish partnerships for funding and support. (ref. engine room 1 and 3) . Capacitate the professionals on programme implementation and on the use of the guidelines and tools (ref. engine room 2)
Integrated care management: Strengthen the Universal Progressive Home Visit Programme and integrate it with social care services, focusing on children and families in the economic aid scheme. Conduct joint assessments to understand LTC needs and share recommendations.	Drive policy changes and develop policy frameworks to support integrated care management. Convene and build partnerships with public and private to support financing and integration of care services. (ref. engine room 1 and 3) Train key stakeholders to manage and deliver integrated care services effectively. (ref. engine room 2)
Workforce capacitation in social care services: Train the workforce for new social care service models, including mobile units, home care assistance, and integrated health and social care services. Deliver gender-responsive policy solutions to improve labour market inclusivity and social care service quality.	Support capacity-building of public institutions and civil society to deliver these new social care models. Develop bankable initiatives to finance training programs and ensure sustainable funding. (ref. engine room 2 and 3)

Outcome 2: Facilitated Access to Decent Employment Opportunities	
Integrated employment and skills development Services: Implement targeted employment and skills development programs in collaboration with municipalities, non-public sector partners, and employers. Increase technical, soft, and basic skills for youth, women, long-term unemployed, low-skilled individuals, and job seekers in remote areas. Provide support through apprenticeships, vocational training, career counselling, and job placement.	Identify and develop pipelines of bankable initiatives to support these employment and skills development programs. Convene and build partnerships with financiers to create a 'deal room' for funding these initiatives. (ref. engine room 1 and 3) Train stakeholders to deliver effective employment and skills programs. (ref. engine room 2)
Enhanced services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector: Identify and address constraints hindering job retention and preventing undeclared work. Develop and test incentives to formalize enterprises and establish electronic registries. Provide subsidies to employers retaining seasonal workers during off-seasons and explore social insurance schemes for seasonal workers. Develop innovative solutions to expand social insurance coverage to the tourism sector following best practices in the region. In coordination with the employment output ensure newly created decent jobs.	Drive policy and regulatory changes to support the formalization of enterprises and the retention of decent jobs. Develop and finance initiatives to provide subsidies and social insurance schemes. (ref. engine room 1 and 3) Drive social insurance policy changes, developing new schemes and pilots ensuring protection of workers and increase productivity for enterprises (ref. engine room 1 and 3).
Integrated case management for NE Beneficiaries: Enhance IT systems and train public officials and labour market actors to facilitate integrated case management. Combining outreach with evidence-based case management, integrating cash and care services with employment and skills development programs. Expand communities of practice among public officials and labour market actors.	Support capacity-building efforts to improve integrated case management systems. Develop and finance initiatives to enhance IT systems and provide training for public officials and labour market actors. (ref. engine room 2)

- **Communication and visibility actions**

Branding. To enhance the visibility and recognition of the Joint Programme, a unique project logo will be created, reflecting the programme's objectives and alignment with the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Comprehensive guidelines on logo usage will be prepared, ensuring consistency across all communications across all participating UN agencies. These guidelines will include specifications on logo placement, colour schemes, and co-branding with the Global Accelerator logo. All participating agencies, partners, and stakeholders will be required to use the branded logo in accordance with these guidelines to maintain a unified and professional visual identity across all materials and platforms. Moreover, a programme disclaimer will be a must-have information on all public information materials produced in the life cycle of the programme.

Raise Awareness and Understanding of the Joint Programme's Goals and Benefits. Launch public awareness campaigns through traditional and social media to highlight the programme's goals, expected outcomes, and benefits to society. Organise a national launching event with the participation of key stakeholders. Develop brochures, GIFs, and infographics explaining the programme's key components. Engage with local and national media through press releases, interviews, and invitations to events to ensure continuous coverage. Enhance the

programme's digital presence by creating a project page on the lead agency's website and on the social media channels of all participating UN agencies to provide updates and resources.

Promote inclusive participation and ownership among programme beneficiaries: Conduct outreach sessions in rural and marginalised communities to inform and engage beneficiaries about opportunities and support mechanisms. Use local TV. Establish platforms for dialogue where beneficiaries can voice concerns, provide input, and share success stories. Run campaigns focusing on empowering women and youth through success stories, mentorship programmes, and skill development opportunities. Implement feedback mechanisms such as surveys and suggestion boxes to continuously gather input from beneficiaries.

Enhance visibility and support among national and international stakeholders and partners: organise high level events and forums to showcase the programme's progress, success and future plans. Prepare regular reports and briefings for donor and international partners detailing progress, challenges and impact. Organise field visits to project areas and showcase impact on the lives and livelihoods of final beneficiaries. Foster strategic partnerships with other international organizations and private sector entities to leverage resources and expertise. Document and disseminate best practices and success stories through videos, and publications. Engage in policy advocacy to promote the integration of successful programme elements into national policies and strategies.

Monitoring and evaluation for communication: Progress will be monitored through regular reports, stakeholder feedback, and impact assessments. Key performance indicators will include media reach, stakeholder engagement, beneficiary participation, and policy integration. Regular updates will be shared with all stakeholders to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

Communication work plan and budget: A detailed workplan and budget will be integrated into the joint programme's work plan, ensuring alignment with the Joint SDG Fund brand guidelines and donor visibility requirements. Resources will be allocated for communication materials, media engagement, events, and community outreach activities, with costs monitored and reported as part of the overall programme budget.

4.2. Management Arrangements

The JP will be implemented through the modality of "Delivering as One", within the framework of the GoA and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026, by three UN agencies, (UNDP, UNICEF, and ILO), supported by UN Women and in close partnership with relevant stakeholders. A coordinated, but sufficiently flexible steering mechanism will ensure that activities are effectively aligned. All three agencies have a solid record in collaborating and implementing successful joint UN projects, including Joint SDG Fund. This proposal builds on the partnership and the experience of two previous SDG Fund projects "Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery" and "SDG Financing" and the close cooperation between UNDP and UNICEF in the fields of social protection and youth employment.

Steering committee

A steering committee (SC) will be established to oversee and coordinate the operations of this JP, taking all necessary strategic decisions based on the JP initial plan and budget as well as monitoring data. It will provide policy guidance and recommendations regarding the JP's strategy and objectives, receive and comment on annual reports, approve annual plans of operation and reports, and participate in the evaluation of the JP. The SC will meet at least once a year. The SC will be composed of representatives of the participating UN agencies, government counterparts and key stakeholders. It will be co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the representatives of the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation and Ministry of Health and Social Protection. It is expected to have a high-level of ownership of the joint programme, as the Government

counterparts were consulted during the drafting of this proposal and show high levels of commitment.

As JP implementation will be based on a structure of several institutions and organizations that cooperate and interact with one another, the Steering Committee will keep a close watch on institutional relations and be ready to pro-actively intervene to avoid bottlenecks developing. Performance indicators will have to be constructed so as to flag such issues quickly triggering corrective measures.

The JP will receive advisory support by the IPMG on Human Capital Development to ensure coherence of the interventions and alignment with the national priorities and coherence with different interventions implemented by development partners. More technical discussions will take place in the thematic group on Employment, Skills and Decent Jobs and the Thematic group on Social Protection and in the thematic working group composed of representatives of the CSOs in the country.

Management arrangements

UNDP is the lead UN agency (Lead PUNO) and provides coordination and programmatic leadership, coherence and quality during JP implementation, in accordance with the JP results framework, workplan and budget and in adherence to quality standards. As lead PUNO, UNDP will:

- Organize and chair JP meetings;
- Update the JP results framework, workplan and budget in adherence to quality standards;
- Lead joint monitoring and learning efforts, including joint field missions;
- Facilitate programmatic learning and adjustments;
- Consolidate the annual results-based report, based upon inputs from other PUNOs;
- Report to JP SC meetings.

All participating UN agencies will implement activities and outputs as defined in the results framework and guided by a workplan defining complementary and shared activities, as well as roles and responsibilities in line with each agency's mandate and expertise. Jointly agreed milestones and regular interagency meetings will ensure effectiveness. All PUNOs are responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming and aligning each output with the gender mandate of their respective agencies. Communication and collaboration will be key, with the lead PUNO for each output taking the lead in ensuring gender is mainstreamed across their activities.

UNDP, UNICEF and ILO will manage the programme jointly and in an organic manner, with joint planning to enhance the synergy of their respective mandates. The Joint Programme Team will be coordinated by a national Joint Programme Coordinator, to be hired by UNDP, ensuring cohesive implementation across participating agencies. The Joint Programme team will also include communications, monitoring and evaluation expertise as well as a driver. Additionally, ILO will designate a project coordinator to ensure day-to-day coordination and technical supervision of programme activities, complemented by national and international domain experts hired to perform highly specialised tasks in specific areas of the intervention, and will ensure that the joint programme delivers its results to the required standards and within the constraints of time and cost.

Overall supervision and backstopping will be carried out by the technical officer from the country and regional offices of UNDP, UNICEF and ILO.

While the Steering Committee will serve as the authority to provide strategic direction and oversight on the JP, the Participating UN Organizations will: (1) assume full programmatic and financial responsibility and accountability for the funds transferred by the Joint SDG Fund for this JP; (2) deduct their indirect costs on contributions received according to their regulations and rules, including direct programme charges, taking into

account the size and complexity of the JP. Each UN Organization will deduct 7% overhead costs of the total allocation received for the Organization. Each PUNO will make available enough budget to cover the common costs for visibility, Steering committee meetings, coordination meeting and ensure that a minimum of 5 % of their budget portion is allocated for monitoring, reporting, and evaluation, as well as another 5 % for communication and visibility, plus budget for covering the shared costs.

During implementation, the JP team, under the overall guidance of UNDP as the lead PUNO, will manage for results and meet at least monthly to assess the performance and review the indicators. Responsibility and accountability for the implementation of activities will rest with each individual PUNO. The JP management team, under the overall guidance of UNDP as the lead PUNO, will ensure gender mainstreaming and monitor performance in alignment with gender equality objectives. The JP management team will monitor the implementation of activities and achievement of results in accordance with the JP results framework, work plan and budget. Each PUNO will ensure monitoring their own results, tracking performance through the collection of appropriate and credible data and other evidence; analysing evidence to improve effectiveness and efficiency, and adjusting JP results and strategy if needed; and checking assumptions and risks, including review of the sustainability plan and exit strategy.

The JP team will produce one consolidated, results-based annual report using the standard report template applicable to JPs. Reporting on the Global Accelerator Joint SDG Fund will be results-oriented, and evidence based. Each PUNO will provide UNDP, as the Lead Organization, with the narrative reports prepared in accordance with instructions and templates developed.

5. Monitoring, accountability, financial management, and public disclosure

Reporting on the Joint SDG Fund will be focused on concrete results and grounded in evidence. The RCO focal point and lead PUNO is responsible for coordinating and drafting a concise annual report (using the Fund Secretariat template/guidance), which is submitted to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat through the RC by January 31st of the following year. Additionally, a final narrative report must be prepared and submitted to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat through the RC no later than two (2) months after the operational closure of the Joint Programme activities.

The JP Steering Committee, co-chaired by the RC, is mandated to oversee and monitor the implementation of the joint programme, with the involvement of Joint SDG Fund Secretariat to which it must submit data and information upon requested. Additionally, the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat may request additional insights, such as policy papers, value-for-money analysis, case studies, infographics, or blogs/articles, as needed.

PUNOs will be required to include information on complementary funding received from other sources (both UN cost sharing, and external sources of funding/financing) for the activities supported by the Fund, including in kind contributions and/or South-South Cooperation initiatives, in the report.

PUNOs at Headquarters level shall provide the Administrative Agent with the following statements and reports prepared in accordance with its accounting and reporting procedures, consolidate the financial reports, as follows:

Annual financial reports as of 31st December each year with respect to the funds disbursed to it from the Joint SDG Fund Account, to be provided no later than four months after the end of the applicable reporting period; and

A final financial report, after the completion of the activities financed by the Joint SDG Fund and including the final year of the activities, to be provided no later than 30 April of the year following the operational closing of the project activities.

The JP will be using a pass-through fund management modality where UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office will act as the Administrative Agent. The programmatic UN entity of the Facility shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent of the Joint SDG Fund (Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office). Such funds will be administered by each UN Agency, Fund, and Project in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures. The entity shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent.

A minimum of 5% of the JP budget is allocated for monitoring, reporting, evaluation, audit and communications. Indirect costs of the Participating Organizations recovered through project support costs will be 7%, with exception of WFP and UNHCR which should be 6,5%. All other costs incurred by each PUNO in carrying out the activities for which it is responsible under the Fund will be recovered as direct costs. Procedures on financial transfers, extensions, financial and operational closure, and related administrative issues are stipulated in the Operational Guidance of the Joint SDG Fund. PUNOs and partners must comply with Joint SDG Fund brand guidelines, which includes information on donor visibility requirements.

ANNEX 1: Mapping of related projects, investments and other development initiatives

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
Strategic Policy Options for SDG Financing	JP produced several assessments and generated knowledge for policy advocacy. These include analyses of budgetary spending by year and sector; the feasibility of introducing a social protection floor; the fiscal space for financing an expanded social protection system; reforming of the economic assistance programme; investments in early childhood education development and education; and financing of long-term care needs for the elderly; funding and delivery of social care services at the local level. JP has contributed to the capacity building of 189 civil servants at the national and local level. This comprises the training of 30 social security experts and Ministry staff on social security contribution collection and compliance of rural workers in Albania; and the training of 159 staff in 10 municipalities for increasing their skills on efficient and effective use of revenues and resources for delivering gender responsive social services. JP championed a data-centric approach for decision-making. This included supporting the Ministry of Finance and Economy in preparing metadata frameworks and datasets that can be used for designing a data visualization platform (through its own resources), and the preparation of an SDG Investor Map for the country. JP initiated the process of drafting the Integrated Financing Framework for Albania (INFF). The fluctuating engagement of national partners. JP has completed the assessment and diagnostics through a development finance assessment (DFA). The publication of the DFA report and the next steps in the process will be	The programme is relevant for the JP as it aims at: looking at avenues for innovative financing mechanisms to achieve SDGs, directing country's financial resources are directed towards SDGs investments and support to make budgetary framework more equitable, addressing disparities in resource allocation.	UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UN Women, UNFPA	927,000 USD Joint SDG fund	2020-2024

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
	further coordinated with the Inter-ministerial Committee and its technical secretariat.				
UN Joint Programme Leave No One Behind (LNB2)	Vulnerable persons are informed of their rights and entitlements and have the skill and opportunity to influence local policy planning Innovative and improved public services available for vulnerable persons. Municipality, regional and local social service providers have improved capacities for efficient delivery of socially inclusive and gender responsive social services. LGUs and/or service providers share experiences and scale-up best practices on socially inclusive and gender responsive service provision. Ministries/ Agencies have improved resources and mechanisms for evidence-based policy development and implementation. Social care services and social workers in Albania meet professional and internationally recognized standards.	The programme's outcomes and outputs are closely linked and support the national reforms, development goals/ strategies of the Government of Albania regarding social protection and inclusion, and the wider framework for human capital and social development.	UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA	LNB2 Programme is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with CHF 8.0 million	2021-2025
EU4Youth	Strengthened institutional capabilities facilitate the delivery of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2023-2024. Inter-institutional governance mechanisms effectively coordinate and manage the Youth Guarantee in Albania Local Partnership Networks are established and strengthened in the three pilot municipalities. Youth Guarantee Partnerships on the ground are co-designed and delivered with social partners and youth to address the needs of vulnerable NEETs. On-going monitoring and evaluation to fine-tune the YG in view of its national deployment, is implemented. VET providers are furnished with the tools and capacities to develop and deliver Early Warning Systems and programmes aimed at preventing student drop-out.	The project is relevant for this JP as it will demonstrate a comprehensive approach to addressing labour market and inclusion barriers for young NEET and ensuring sustainable transition of youth from school to work.	UNDP and UNICEF	2,200,000 EUR EU Delegation in Albania	2023-2026

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
	Institutions at the local level are capacitated to support the delivery of the Traineeship Programmes in occupations relevant to the green economy. Apprenticeship model is designed and piloted in occupations relevant to the green economy in the three pilot areas, in partnership with private sector.				
Business partnerships and solutions for SDGs	The UNJP, building on the success of its pilot phase, aims to enhance the private sector's capabilities for a successful transition to sustainable and SDG-aligned practices. Additionally, the project complements technical capacity building with interventions in awareness raising, trade facilitation and policy support to create an enabling environment for companies to thrive. The overall goal of the project is to prepare and train Albanian businesses for transitioning to sustainable practices and thus being able to join international value chains. Positive effects of increased implementation of sustainable business practices in Albania include the creation of decent jobs translating in decreased migration and mitigation of labour shortages, an increased alignment with EU standards in preparation for EU integration, a higher added value in local production and higher quality of goods produced which translates in higher competitiveness and increased exports and business opportunities. Furthermore, the implementation of sustainable business practices contributes to the reduction of environmental damages caused by business activities and to improved human health due to production processes with fewer residues.	This UNJP is relevant in providing models of sustainable business practices, which include also decent working conditions.	UNDP, ILO FAO, and UNIDO	USD 4,833,830 SIDA	2022-2023 pilot 2024-2027
Skills Development for Employment (SD4E)	Supported institutional transformation of the National Employment Service to the National Agency for Employment and Skills (main	SD4E has established a long standing partnership with the Albanian institutions responsible for managing	UNDP	8,000,000 CHF	2015-2027

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
	governing body for the implementation of the employment and skills policies in Albania) Improved legal and regulatory framework for the implementation of the skills development and employment services reforms. Developed Labour Market Information Observatory to support evidence-based policymaking. Supported Albanian institutions to design, implement and monitor the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 - 2022 and develop the new Employment and Skills Strategy 2023 – 2030. Designed and supported implementation of reformed Active Labour Market Programmes, based on an individualized approach	the employment and skills development sector and has accompanied foundational reforms in the sector. The JP will leverage on these partnership and on various models of Active Labour market programmes developed with the support of SD4E			
EU for Labour Market Inclusion (EU4LMI)	EU4LMI's expected impact is to enhance the partnership of the NAES with municipalities, so that at the end all labour market actors establish and deliver inclusive and integrated employment and skills development for beneficiaries of cash assistance, NEET, PwD and young mothers not in employment, all referred to as final beneficiaries. Improved capacities of regional NAES offices and local employment offices in the 19 municipalities Intensive counselling provided for employment to 600 vulnerable jobseekers (sub-granting). Improved vocational guidance and counselling tools and services delivered by all 17 employment offices and 28 VET providers in the 19 municipalities. Qualitative, flexible, targeted trainings provided in basic skills (literacy, numeracy, and digital) to 600 low-skills vulnerable jobseekers (sub-granting). Improved awareness on active living and supported employment among PwD and relevant stakeholders. Improved the accessibility and necessary human capacities in 5 employment offices.	The JP will leverage on the activation measures targeting NE beneficiaries, people with disabilities, young NEET and young mothers delivered in partnership with 19 municipalities and other labour market actors. It will also serve as a model that will be scaled up during the implementation of this JP, and will ensure that staff of other municipalities are exposed to new models and are capacitated.	UNDP Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF)	3,000,000	2023-2026

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
	Output 3.3. Employment and skills development programmes provided to 200 jobseekers with disabilities (sub-granting).				
Sub-Regional Project “Strengthening national and local systems to support the effective socio-economic integration of returnees in the Western Balkans” EU financed	Local returnee integration strategies are developed with selected municipalities. Elements of local returnee integration strategies are implemented in selected municipalities, including innovative activities on livelihoods and skills building, etc. Significant number of urgent administrative issues faced by returnees are addressed.	The project enhances the capabilities of the Western Balkan authorities to implement holistic solutions to economic and social empowerment of returnees. By tackling the root causes and negative drivers of migration of Roma and vulnerable populations, the project contributes to implementation of the broader social inclusion agenda in the Western Balkans. Lessons learned and best practices will be used by the new Joint Programme.	EU, UNDP, World Bank, Council of Europe	4.6 million EUR (for Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia)	2020-2024
EU4Social Care Strengthen municipal and central level capacities to establish and deliver social care services for citizens, and in alignment with EU standards, ensuring equitable and effective support for citizens at risk of social exclusion	Support to establish and/or extend existing social care services and specialized services(children; women, young people and people / children with disabilities). Strengthen human resources and financial capacities of municipalities for integrated social care services delivery and integrating shock responsive approaches to local social plans . At least 6 000 families and 18 000 individuals at risk of exclusion accessing community- based services / social services at the local level 100 individuals at-risk of exclusion accessing 4 new or extended established specialized social care services; 350 frontline professionals will have improved their technical competences in social services delivery;	The project is relevant to the intervention priorities of the SDG accelerator for Albania. It contributes directly to the provision of social care services for the most at risk groups/ families at the local level. It has a special focus on children at risk and in need for protection and for children part of the economic aid assistance. It aims at providing support and capacity building at the local level to enhance the provision of integrated and intersectoral services	UNICEF	3.1 MEUR EU Delegation to Albania	2023-2026

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
Support strategic and normative framework of social protection, public finance and shock responsive approach in Albania and support the system of social care services through deinstitutionalization	Support with technical expertise analysis and the development of the normative framework, annual monitoring and regular policy dialogue in the area of social protection Conduct analysis related to public finance, spending in social protection, education and health sectors and promoting an integrated and system approach to social protection system. Develop standards, guidelines and provide technical support to decentralization of social protection, reform on disability and cash assistance with a focus on children Support deinstitutionalization of residential care for children and young people	The programme is relevant to the SDG accelerator for Jobs and Social protection initiative as it aims at: a) generating evidence on poverty (child poverty) and vulnerability and the impact of social protection programmes on children and communities; b) promote responses and transformative role of social protection, care systems and family policies; c) enhance shock responsive of social protection and linkages to employment, education and health systems; d) promote a case management approach and a continuum of social care services at local level and e) advocate to the adequate and transparent public finance in the area of social protection at local and central level; e) support the bio-psycho social assessment and Multi-Disciplinary commission on the disability reform and referral mechanism.	UNICEF	UNICEF HQ 1,200,000 USD	2022-2026
QËNDRO! Preventing drop-out in secondary schools - "Every Young person matter" (ongoing)	Improved data and evidence-based policy for preventing drop-out of young people Upscaled school practices to boost education quality, innovation and reduced drop-out Strengthen local government capacities and upgraded skills for life and inclusive employability	The project addresses the young people at risk of drop out who are potential youth not in education and not in employment. It addresses systemic issues by establishing a prevention and intervention	UNICEF	EUR 4,939,000 Italian Cooperation	2021-2024

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
	10 000 at risk students (15- 24 years old) reached out in 13 municipalities and 100 schools will establish early warning system to prevent school drops out; 430 teachers, psychologist, social workers directors benefited from the career education and guidance training; 402 teachers and network leaders trained in blended learning pedagogy; 11 000 young people with enhanced skills through UPSHIFT(youth initiated actions at the community and development of critical solutions for the community) and fostering youth leadership including media literacy; communication and visibility campaign to support girls' enrolment in VET, including non-gender-segregated pathways.	mechanism, promoting career pathways for young people, strengthening of the workforce in social protection and education to work with young people at risk and enhancing policy dialogue across the main institutions responsible for education and employment of young people in Albania, . This contributes to achieving the accelerator's areas of work, particularly in the area of jobs and skills development.			
Transforming National Response to Human Trafficking in and from Albania (ongoing)	The programme aims to reduce the human trafficking out and in Albania through an integrated sector approach to social protection, establishing linkages with employment, VET and other relevant services as well as capacity building of local government to prevent and protect at risk populations Vulnerable adolescents and communities are increasingly resilient to trafficking and they have access to livelihood opportunities, receive inclusive social services and information, and able to challenge harmful gender and social norms. Groups at high risk are empowered, through a continuum of inclusive social protection and reintegration social inclusive services to reduce (re-) victimization and (re-) trafficking (with a focus on women, girls and children) Local government and anti-trafficking coordination mechanisms at regional level are strengthened to effectively address vulnerabilities and evidence-based response. Provision of social services specialized services for at risk groups (women and children), case	The project has established an integrated approach how to mainstream a thematic issue such as the human trafficking into the broader social protection system and it introduces the approach to prevention, response and reintegration. It is focused at strengthening local level capacities and outreach work at the community level. The first phase has provided concrete recommendations on how to address the importance of adopting targeted approaches responding to a specific issue and needs using a systemic approach to social protection at both local and central level.	UNICEF	EUR 7,400,000 UK Government	2022-2025

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
	management and referral to other services such as, health, education, employment and social protection; mobile services for identification and referral of victims, online services for mental health and psychosocial support, technical expertise to prepare the national Plan of Action on Antitrafficking 2021- 2025; capacity building for law enforcement institutions and social protection workforce; reintegration services and mobile services to youth and families at risk for human trafficking; economic reintegration schemes to enhance employment opportunities (start-ups, soft and ICT skills, internships, employment mediation) in close collaboration with the private sector, National Employment Service, local VET schools				
Improving Community Resilience Program (ICR)	Three target municipalities supported to establish operational resilience centres able to provide integrated social care support services to vulnerable communities. Resilience centres supported to build operational tools, including early warning systems, referral mechanisms, networks and partnership platforms with relevant institutions and service providers at the municipal and regional levels. Resilience centres transparent and innovative management model developed and operationalized.; Vulnerable communities assisted to improve networking, communication abilities and peer support/ representation awareness, through outreach techniques and group activities. Resilience model promoted through showcasing best practices, interacting with beneficiaries and community at large, through communication channels of media, social media etc.	The program expected results are aligned with the broader goals of enhancing community resilience, social inclusion, and sustainable development.	UNDP	3 000 000 USD Donor: USAID Albania	2023–2026
Digital Agriculture for Rural Equality and Tourism	To Harnessing the potential of digitalization to transform the agri-food sector from national level to underserved rural women's	The GREAT project, aimed at economically empowering rural women,	Un Women	677,919 USD	2021-2024-2027

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
(GREAT)Transformation (DART)	empowerment areas in Albania, and to facilitate as well as Responding to strengthen women's roles and contribution to rural development in the challenging agricultural context of the 2030 Agenda country by fostering an agenda for Sustainable Development and its core principle of leaving no-one behind. Expected results: An enabling policy and legislative environment to promote and translate into action women's economic empowerment and access to and control over productive assets. The capacities of rural advisory services, municipal institutions and national partners are developed in the provision of gender-responsive services for rural tourism, agri-business and value chain development. Women's capacity to start and develop own business is strengthened by coaching and mentoring, improved access to finance and agro-extension services. Technical support is provided for gender-responsive policy and law formulation and implementation in rural development, including the LEADER framework. digitalization, enhancing access to digital services and developing digital skills of small agricultural producers.	aligns with JP and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. By focusing on sustainable development, gender equality, and the 2030 Agenda's principles, the program's efforts to provide economic opportunities, particularly in specific regions, contribute to inclusive growth and social protection for marginalized populations. DART interventions in providing access to digital services for small producers and upgrading the digital curriculum, teacher training and relevant equipment in VET secondary schools and VET centers will be used in skilling, reskilling and upskilling of the unemployed and laid off workers as well as those in social cash assistance scheme.	ILO, FAO , ITU	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS Tirana) 3.300.000 SDG Fund	

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans	Western Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo*, Serbia) systematically integrate gender equality and become more transparent and accountable at all stages of national and local policymaking and budgeting processes Expected results: Outcome 1: By 2023, national and local governments apply gender responsive budgeting to integrate gender equality principles in public financing processes Outcome 2: By 2023 public oversight bodies* women including the disadvantaged, demand transparency and accountability of public policies and budgets to gender equality processes	The project/programme's relevance to the JP and Global Accelerator stems from its focus on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB), which plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality and inclusivity within macro-economic policies and public spending. Gender-responsive budgeting is a powerful tool that ensures that government budgets and policies take into account the different needs, priorities, and impacts on women and men.	UN Women	USD 4,999,574.00 Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)	
Others					
EU4Social Inclusion	The overall objective is to expand coverage, inclusiveness, effectiveness and emergency responsiveness of social care services, pre-university education and employment opportunities for youth and adults in Albania, including populations at risk of exclusion. The specific objectives are: a) Improving accessibility and quality of integrated social care services at the local level; b) Promote social inclusion in employment and employability for youth, men and women; c) Enhance inclusive quality learning and promote educational attainment in pre-university education for all girls and boys – with a special focus on Roma and Egyptians, disability and other disadvantaged backgrounds;	The EU for Social Inclusion programme is financed by the EU Delegation to Albania under IPA 2019. This programme is relevant because it contributes directly to social protection, employment and VET sectors, through budget support, Technical assistance and a grant scheme at the local level.	Ministry of Health and Social Protection Ministry of Economy Innovation and Culture Ministry of Finance GOPA – Technical Assistance UNICEF – Grant Scheme UNDP – Grant Scheme	50,6 MEUR	2020-2025

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
Promoting regional economic development in Albania through improved vocational education and training	ProSEED 2.0 has three main components contained under one umbrella. They aim to: improve vocational education and training (VET) and modernise qualifications and curricula by integrating digital and green elements into 10 VET courses. The programme also provides the requisite equipment and training to VET personnel. Approximately 5,000 people are now gaining green and digital skills via non-formal and formal qualification measures. support MSMEs with a focus on improving the competitiveness of around 800 MSMEs by digitalising their business processes and introducing green business elements. Five new business development services will be established at national, regional or local level. provide policy development support to enhance the capabilities of the Ministry of Finance and Economy and its subordinate institutions to develop four new employment-related strategies or action plans that include digital or green economic aspects.	The JP will establish coordination mechanisms with this project on joint areas of Improving the employment situation of young people in Albania, taking into account green and digital elements.	GIZ, Ministry of Finance and Economy, National Agency for Employment and Skills	EUR 10.5 Mio. + EUR 7.65 Mio. EU - funds	2022-2026

ANNEX 2: Integrated results framework

Joint Programme Outcomes			
CF Outcome statement 1: By 2026, there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion. (CF Outcome A)			
Outcome indicator 1.1: Proportion of total government spending on essential services as a proportion of total government spending and GDP: i) Education; ii) Health; iii) Social protection; (CF)	Baseline: 2019 i. T: 11.4; GDP: 3.3 ii. T: 10.0; GDP: 2.99 iii. T: 32.5; GDP: 9.5	Target 2026 i. T, GDP: greater than baseline value ii. T, GDP: greater than baseline value iii. T, GDP: greater than baseline value	Means of verification: INSTAT; MoFE; GoA Housing Department
Outcome indicator 1.2: Number of children (boys and girls) 0- 10 years old benefiting from the child benefit programme	Baseline: 0	Target 2026: 86,000	Means of verification: Administrative data / State Social Services
CF Outcome statement 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. (CF Outcome B)			
Outcome indicator 2.1: Labour force participation rates, by sex, age (SDG 8.5.2) (CF)	Baseline: 2019 T: 69.6 M: 77.6 F: 61.6 YP (15-24) T:37 M: 43; F: 30	Target 2026: T:69.7 M:77.7 F:61.6 YP (15-24) T:38 M:44; F:31	Means of verification: INSTAT, LFS
Outcome indicator 2.2: Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, by sex (SDG 8.6.1) (CF)	Baseline: T: 26 M:26 F: 25	Target 2026: T: 21.4 M: 21 F: 22	Means of verification: INSTAT, Labour Force Survey (LFS)
Outcome indicator 2.3. proportion of informal employment in total employment by sex and sector SDG 8.3.1	Baseline: Total Men Women Tourism 48.3% 49.7% 44.8%	Target 2026:	Means of verification: Administrative data / Institute of Statistics / Labour Force Survey

Joint Programme Outputs			
Output 1.1. Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.			
Output indicator 1.1.1: Document on policy scenario's developed and costed for universal and targeted child benefit	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: Policy options document and costing; JP monitoring reports
Output indicator 1.1.2: Operational and monitoring framework on child benefit is developed and adopted for universal child benefit	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports
Output 1.2. Integrated care management through improved gender sensitive outreach and intersectionality (Universal Home Visit Programme and support to Long-Term Care).			
Output indicator 1.2.1. Number of households receiving integrated support from the JP	Baseline: 0	Target: 200	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, Administrative data, municipal social services
Output indicator 1.2.2. Coordination tools/guidelines for intersectional service delivery created	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports
Output indicator 1.2.3. Joint assessments conducted to understand LTC needs and gaps and roadmap for LTC operationalization and scale up	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: Joint assessment report, JP monitoring reports
Output indicator 1.2.4. Number of individuals benefiting from LTC delivered with the support of the JP	Baseline: 0	Target: 500	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, Municipal social services reports
Output 1.3. Capacitate the workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men			
Output indicator 1.3.1: Number of care professional (sex disaggregated) trained for delivering innovative social care service models by the JP	Baseline: 0	Target: 200 At least 50% are women	Means of verification: Training materials and training reports, list of participants
Output indicator 1.3.2: Training curricula on home-based care	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: New training curricula available

professionals developed			
Output 2.1. Integrated Employment and Skills Development Services delivered in partnership with 2 targeted municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment.			
Output indicator 2.1.1: Number of employment and skills development programmes implemented in partnership with local level actors, supported by the JP	Baseline: 0	Target: 4 UNDP: Voucher scheme, Social Reintegration, Traineeship ILO: Apprenticeship, vocational training UNW": financial literacy and entrepreneurship, job placement and career counselling in place	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, NESS annual report
Output indicator 2.1.2: Number of women in NE households or marginalised employment, including those laid off from garment industry, who benefit from employment and skills development programmes implemented in partnership with local level actors, supported by the JP	Baseline: 0	Target: UNDP: 230 ILO: 100 UNW 100 rural women	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, NAES administrative data, NESS annual report
Output indicator 2.1.3. Number of pupils at risk of dropping out who receive training on soft skills and career advice (14-18 years old), supported by the JP	Baseline: 0	Target: 500 At least 50% are women	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports,
Output indicator 2.1.4. Proposal/policy brief for introducing child and safety measures related to seasonal work	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, Policy brief published
Output 2.2. Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector in 2 target municipalities.			
Output indicator 2.2.1: Approved	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: JP monitoring

roadmap to on working conducted, and recommend incentives for formalisation			reports, Published diagnosis report
Output indicator 2.2.2. Trained marginalised women, placed in decent jobs which making use of additional services	Baseline: 0	Target: 100 (same as 2.1.2)	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, Policy brief published
Output 2.2.3. Options for including high-seasonal workers in the general social insurance scheme developed	Baseline: 0	Target: 1 Feasible scheme	Means of verification: MECI, MHSP, SII
Output 2.2.4: Mechanisms and procedures for the operationalisation of the inclusion of seasonal workers in the social insurance scheme proposed	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: MECI, MHSP, SII
Output 2.3. Integrated Case Management in 2 municipalities/regions for activating social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.			
Output indicator 2.3.1: Number of frontline staff trained on ICM, guidance and counselling and placement	Baseline: 0	Target: 50	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports
Output 2.3.2. Improved IT solution for integrated case management at the local level among employment offices, municipal social services and state social services	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports
Output 2.3.3. Improved operational protocols of integrated case management of NE households	Baseline 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports, joint decision of the ministers.

- **Alignment with GA objectives**

COMPONENT/ACTIVITY	CHECK "X" if proposal addresses
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I. Integrated and well-coordinated national public policies and strategies (as part of the development of the national Global Accelerator roadmaps)	
1. Support diagnostics/ stocktaking/ policy appraisals of existing national social protection, employment, just transition strategies, policies, schemes	X
2. Support partner countries in identification and development of integrated policies, strategies, programs	x
II. National frameworks for adequate and sustainable financing of social protection and employment interventions	
1. Support existing and new financing strategies to improve the use of existing resources and to mobilize domestic and international resources in a sustainable and equitable way.	x
III. Strengthened national social protection and employment programmes and systems	
1. Build robust, sustainable, adaptive, and gender-responsive national social protection systems through national social dialogue	x
2. Develop / implement employment policies and programmes to facilitate access to decent work opportunities	x
IV. Strengthened national ownership and consensus building	
1. Support national dialogue for the development of national Global Accelerator roadmaps	
2. Develop capacities for collective action on social protection and decent jobs	x
3. Provide coordinated technical and policy advise	x
4. Support the adoption of a common results framework and data collection and reporting mechanisms (in line with the Global Accelerator framework)	
V. Innovation and new knowledge, evidence, and tools	
1. Support knowledge generation	x
2. Develop evidence-based tools and knowledge products	x

ANNEX 2.1: Integrated results framework – Joint SDG Fund global indicators

Joint Programme contribution to Joint SDG Fund global indicators (as relevant)			
Engine room 1. Shifting policy/regulatory frameworks			
Number of new or enhanced the integrated policy solutions and regulatory changes formulated to accelerate SDGs with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline: 0	Target: 2	Means of verification: Integrated case management protocols approved jointly by both ministers;

			Integrated care management protocols
Number of targeted countries where the integrated policy solutions and regulatory changes are implemented to promote equal access to and use of services, goods and resources by women and girls with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification JP monitoring reports and documentation
Number of individuals benefiting from the integrated policy solutions and regulatory changes implemented with Joint SDG Fund support, disaggregated by population segments (e.g. sex, age, persons with disabilities, etc.) with a focus on Leaving No One Behind.	Baseline: 0	Target: 430 employment and training 700 integrated care 500 pupils registered in school (14-17 years old)	Means of verification: Administrative data
Engine room 2. Capacity building at scale			
Number of governmental (both at central and sub-central levels) and non-governmental organizations including social partners with enhanced capacity to design, implement and finance integrated policies, regulations and innovative solutions for SDG acceleration, with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline: 0	Target:13	Means of verification: Reports on capacity building, list of participants
Number of tools, procedures and mechanisms (e.g. SOPs, training module, incentive structures) developed or implemented, focused on building capacities for SDG acceleration with Joint SDG Fund support (disaggregated by central and local actors).	Baseline: 0	Target: 3 at the local level	Means of verification: JP monitoring reports and documentations
Number of experts identified and deployed to support RCs/UNCTs on SDG acceleration with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline: 0	Target: 5	Means of verification: Experts contracts, JP monitoring reports and documentation
Engine room 3. Devising a financing mix (deal room)			
Amount in US\$ of financing leveraged for integrated multi-sectoral solutions, with support from the Joint SDG Fund (disaggregation by type of investors – e.g. Gov, private, PPP, DFIs/IFIs).	Baseline: 0	Target: \$ 26,500,000 (2026) Gov: \$ 24,500,000 EU: \$ 2,000,000	Means of verification: NESS progress reports, NSPS Progress Report, JP monitoring Reports
Ratio of financing leveraged for integrated multi-sectoral solutions against the committed funds provided by the Joint SDG Fund.	Baseline: 0	Target: 1:12	Means of verification: NESS progress reports, NSPS Progress Report, JP monitoring Reports

ANNEX 2.2: Work plan

Joint Programme Workplan

Outcome/Output	Geographic focus	Start	End	PUNO	SDG Targets	Gender Equality Marker	Human Rights Marker	QCPR function	Budget (US\$)
Output 0. Effective programme management, monitoring, reporting and communication	National	Month 1	Month 24	UNDP, supported by UNICEF, ILO	/	2	2	/	UNDP: 274,999 UNICEF 94,652 ILO 114,528
Outcome 1. Extended coverage and integrated social protection system with a focus on child benefits, family support, and enhanced quality and outreach of care services.									
Output 1.1. Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.	National, regional, municipal	Month 3	Month 6	UNICEF	SDG.1.3.; 16.6.1	2	2	Policy Advice and Thought Leadership	UNICEF: 114,000
Output 1.2. Integrated care management through improved gender sensitive outreach and effective use of electronic registers.	National, regional, municipal	Month 3	Month 9	UNICEF, UNDP	SDG.3.8; 16.6.1	2	2	Direct Support/Service Delivery Convening/Partnerships/Knowledge Sharing	UNICEF: 59,400 UNDP: 85,968

								Policy Advice and Thought Leadership	
Output 1.3. Capacitated workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men	National, regional, municipal	Month 3	Month 12	UNICEF, UNDP	SDG.3.8; 16.6.1	2	2	Capacity Development/Technical Assistance	UNDP: 31,968 UNICEF: 243,000
Outcome 2. Increased employability and access to decent work opportunities for marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, through targeted employment and skills development services.									
Output 2.1. Integrated employment and skills development services delivered in partnership with targeted municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment.	National, regional, municipal	Month 3	Month 18	UNDP, UNICEF, ILO	SDG 4.4.; 5.5.; 8.5; 16.6.1	2	2	Direct Support/Service Delivery Convening/Partnerships/Knowledge Sharing	UNDP: 290,165 ILO: 82,912 UNICEF 209,848

Output 2.2. Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector	National, regional, municipal	Month 3	Month 15	ILO, UNDP	SDG 8.3, 8.5; 16.6.1	2	2	Convening/Partnerships/Knowledge Sharing	ILO: 156,800 UNDP: 11,340
Output 2.3. Integrated case management in targeted municipalities/regions for activating social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.	National, regional, municipal	Month 3	Month 22	UNDP, UNICEF	SDG 8.5; 16.6.1	2	2	Capacity Development/Technical Assistance	UNDP: 29,592

ANNEX 3: Budget per UNSDG Categories

UNSDG BUDGET CATEGORIES	PUNO 1 UNDP		PUNO 2 UNICEF		PUNO 3 ILO		TOTAL	
	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)
1. Staff and other personnel	207,000	90,000 70,000 In Kind contribution	53,000	143,365 (UNWomen contribution in kind – 36,006USD)	114,000	50,000	374,000	353,365
2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials	1,200						1,200	
3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (including Depreciation)	10,000				2,000		12,000	
4. Contractual services	137,000		140,000		190,000		467,000	
5.Travel	7,200						7,200	
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	275,000		475,000				750,000	
7. General Operating and other Direct Costs	39,337.99		6,225		25,280		70,842.99	
Total Direct Costs	676737.99		674,225		331,280		1,682,243	
8. Indirect Support Costs (7% of total direct costs – except for WFP and UNHCR which should apply 6.5% of total direct costs)	47,371.66		47,195.75		23,189.60		117,757.01	
TOTAL Costs	724,109.65	160,000	721,420.75	143,365	354,469.60	50,000	1,800,000	353,365

ANNEX 4: Risk Matrix

Assess the main risks related to implementation of the JP in the simplified risk matrix below. Risk level should be determined by multiplying the likelihood by the impact. Risk level should be described as Very High, High, Medium, or Low based on the image below. See further instruction below (delete the instructions before finalizing the ProDoc)

Risks	Categories	Risk Level: (Likelihood x Impact, as per instructions)	Likelihood: Certain - 5 Likely - 4 Possible – 3 Unlikely - 2 Rare – 1	Impact: Essential – 5 Major - 4 Moderate - 3 Minor – 2 Insignificant - 1	Mitigation measures	Risk owner
Government and policy risks Lack of political will or changes in government priorities may delay or derail policy adjustments and financial investments. Potential changes following the general elections in 2025. Ineffective cooperation between central and regional/local actors leading to misalignment with national policies and standards.	1.1. Government commitment 5.2. Political will 5.3. Political instability	Medium	2	3	To ensure sustained support, the JP will maintain the engagement of key policymakers early and commitments from key government officials. The programme will establish clear communication channels and engage in regular coordination meetings and joint planning sessions to ensure alignment and effective cooperation.	UNDP, RCO
Stakeholder engagement risks Key stakeholders may be unwilling or unable to participate fully, leading to fragmented implementation. Willingness and commitment from targeted municipalities to participate and invest in new service models.	1.11. Stakeholder engagement 7.4. Roles and responsibilities among partners	Medium	3	4	Dedicated attention will be placed from the start on establishing clear roles and responsibilities and fostering ongoing communication and collaboration through regular stakeholder meetings and updates. Engage local government representatives from the outset, provide clear benefits and incentives for participation, and build local champions to drive	PUNO

					commitment. Conduct outreach sessions in rural and marginalised communities to inform and engage beneficiaries about opportunities and support mechanisms.	
Resource availability and commitments risks. Insufficient financial, human, or technical resources may hinder the development and implementation of interventions. Inadequate funding from public, private, and international sources to sustain the proposed models.	5.1. Government commitment; 3.8. Capacity development of national partners	Medium	3	4	The programme will engage in diversifying the funding sources, prioritising interventions based on resource availability and building capacity incrementally. Efforts will be placed to develop comprehensive funding strategies, engage donors and private partners and encourage multi-year funding commitments.	PUNO
Capacity and capability risks. Public officials, social care workers, and labour market actors may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to implement new service models. Educational institutions and training providers may be unable to develop and deliver relevant and effective upskilling programs.	3.8. Capacity development of national partners; 1.11. Stakeholder engagement	Medium	3	4	Tailored and comprehensive training programs are planned to address this risk. The JP will provide ongoing support and build capacity incrementally during the implementation. PUNOs will collaborate with relevant stakeholders to co-develop training curricula, ensuring that the training aligns with labour market needs and provide tailored capacity-building support to training providers.	PUNO

Cultural and social acceptance risks. Resistance from targeted communities, families, and individuals may limit participation in the proposed interventions. Lack of social and cultural acceptance of formalised employment and social protection measures.	1.11. Stakeholder engagement; 3.8. Capacity development of national partners	Low	2	2	The JP will design community engagement and awareness campaigns to build trust and acceptance and involve community leaders in the planning and implementation processes. Implementing targeted communication strategies to highlight the benefits of policies and measures and introduce and address cultural barriers through sensitization programs.	PUNO
Economic and political stability risks. Economic downturns, political instability, or external shocks may disrupt the funding and execution of programs.	1.11. Stakeholder engagement	Low	2	3	Developing contingency plans, secure multi-year funding commitments, and establish flexible implementation strategies that can adapt to changing conditions.	RCO, UNDP
Behavioural change and operational risks. Beneficiaries and employers may be resistant to changing behaviours, such as participating in upskilling programs or adopting decent work policies. Logistical challenges, such as infrastructure limitations or coordination issues, may impede the delivery of services.	1.11. Stakeholder engagement; 1.2. Gender	High	3	3	The JP will allow beneficiary input, offer incentives and showcase benefits in pilot programs, conduct thorough planning and accompanying risk assessments, and developing contingency plans. It will also improve monitoring and evaluation and offer customised training. Working closely with legal experts and policymakers will help mitigate issues/barriers linked to regulatory challenge.	PUNO

ANNEX 5: Localization marker

SDG Localisation Marker Score

Dimensions	Criteria or eligibility	Responses	Explanation	Means of verification
Programme Design	Does the programme or initiative explicitly include results and/or expected outcomes directly related to advancing SDG localization?	Yes	The JP includes specific outcomes aimed at localizing SDGs in social protection, health, and employment, such as enhancing social services and promoting decent work for vulnerable groups (see "Expected key results of the Joint Programme")	Programme document, Results framework
	Is at least 70% or more of the programmatic budget allocated specifically to activities that enhance advocacy, actions or monitoring related to SDG localization?	Yes	The majority of the budget is focused on activities enhancing local SDG actions, such as funding for Universal Child Benefits, long-term care services, and employment programs	Budget allocation, Financial reports
	Were local and regional governments actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase?	Yes	Local and regional governments were key stakeholders in the design phase, contributing to policy mapping and setting priorities.(Thematic group 31 st of May 2024, IPMG on human capital development 5 th of June 2024.)	Minutes of the meetings.
	Were local service providers and/or other local actors and stakeholders actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase?	Yes	Local service providers and stakeholders were consulted in a consultation meeting on 27 th of December 2023 to ensure the program's local relevance	Minutes of the meeting
Advocacy	Has the programme or initiative planned to develop new knowledge material, research, publication or relevant resources related to SDG localization, specifically building on local experience?	No		

	Has the programme or initiative planned to develop specific events, campaigns, communications or capacity-building activities on SDG localization, especially targeted at local or regional governments, local service providers, or other local actors and stakeholders?	No		
Actions	Does the joint programme or initiative incorporate mechanisms, spaces or activities designed to bolster coherent policies, regulations, plans, programmes, and service-delivery approaches or models by local and regional governments and/or local service providers, facilitating their meaningful contributions to the SDGs and addressing the principles of leaving no one behind?	Yes	The JP includes mechanisms to strengthen local policy coherence and service delivery, such as integrated employment and skills development services targeting in particular NE beneficiaes (women and youth), women in marginalised employment, including those who have been laid off from the garment industry, elderly, and people in need of care services.	Programme document, results framework
	Does the joint programme or initiative have an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder approach, involving civil society, academia, citizens, the private sector and/or others to jointly implement transformative initiatives toward localizing the SDGs? This could include, for example, mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs at the local level.	Yes	Government entities such as the Ministry of Economy, Culture, and Innovation (MoECI) and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) are key partners, providing policy support and integrating JP results into national frameworks. The JP includes mechanisms for integrated service delivery and policy coherence, which involve local authorities, social service providers, and civil society organizations. For example, the programme focuses on enhancing the capacities of local government units (LGUs) and service providers to deliver gender-responsive and socially integrated services	Documentation of meetings, consultations, and collaboration agreements with various stakeholders.

	Does the joint programme or initiative include a multi-level governance approach to address the SDG challenges through collaboration between different levels of government, as well as with international organizations, and local communities? This approach recognizes that effective action requires coordinated efforts at various scales, from local and regional to national and global.	Yes	The programme promotes multi-level governance, ensuring collaboration between various levels of government and international organizations.	
	Does the joint programme or initiative feature mechanisms or activities aimed at improving the transparent and accountable financing of SDG localization? This may include the development of decentralized financing policies, the creation of market-ready pipeline of local actions, expansion of local fiscal space, resource mobilization by local or regional governments, participatory budgeting approaches, etc.	Yes	The JP includes mechanisms for transparent financing and resource mobilization, such as developing sustainable financing models for UCB, LTC, and ALMPs delivered in partnership.	JP document
Accountability & Sustainability	Does the joint programme or initiatives include dedicated results, supported by a robust accountability framework, to systematically collect and report on contributions to SDG localization, both at the outcome and output levels?	No		
	Does the joint programme or initiative include a dedicated plan to ensure the sustainability, leveraging of financial resources and replication/expansion of the SDG actions in additional localities,	No		

	developed in collaboration with local and regional governments, local service providers and other local actors and stakeholders?			
Criteria for Scoring		Total # of Yes	8	Marker 2
• Marker 3: Between 9 and 12 criteria marked as Yes. • Marker 2: Between 4 and 8 criteria marked as Yes. • Marker 1: Between 1 and 3 criteria marked as Yes. • Marker 0: None of the criteria marked as Yes.				

ANNEX 6: Gender Equality and Human Rights markers

Gender Equality Marker

Joint Programme Outputs	GEM Score	Justification
Output 1.1. Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.	2	This output directly contributes to gender equality by ensuring that child benefits are universally accessible, which can significantly impact women, who are often primary caregivers. Universal child benefits reduce gender disparities in financial security and support women's economic participation by alleviating childcare burdens.
Output 1.2. Integrated care management through improved gender sensitive outreach and effective use of electronic registers.	2	Improved care management and outreach through electronic registers enhance access to services for all genders. This is particularly beneficial for women, who typically bear the brunt of caregiving responsibilities. By facilitating better care coordination and access, this output promotes gender equality in care responsibilities and access to care services.
Output 1.3. Capacitated workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men	2	Developing a capacitated workforce for social care services creates job opportunities and professional growth, especially for women who dominate the care sector. This output supports gender equality by enhancing women's skills, employment prospects, and economic empowerment in the social care sector.
Output 2.1. Integrated employment and skills development services delivered in partnership	2	Integrating employment and skills development services in collaboration with various stakeholders addresses gender disparities in the labour market. It ensures that women, who

with targeted municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment.		are often underrepresented in certain sectors, receive the necessary training and support to access and excel in employment opportunities, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors.
Output 2.2. Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector	2	Integrated services addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector addresses gender inequalities in employment conditions. This output ensures that women, who are more likely to be in informal and precarious employment, benefit from improved working conditions, fair wages, and job security.
Output 2.3. Integrated case management in targeted municipalities/regions for activating social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.	2	Integrated case management for activating NE individuals directly supports gender equality by providing tailored support to women and men. This approach addresses specific barriers faced by women, such as childcare responsibilities and limited access to training opportunities, thereby promoting equal access to employment and education.

Human Rights Marker

Joint Programme Outputs	HRM Score	Justification
Output 1.1. Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.	2	Universal child benefits promote human rights by ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have access to financial support. This output supports the right to social security and an adequate standard of living for children and their families, addressing inequalities and enhancing social protection. This output is explicitly grounded in the enjoyment of the right to adequate standard of living for children and their families. It addresses inequalities by ensuring all children, regardless of their background, have access to financial support. The output is informed by international standards and recommendations, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations on child protection and social security. It targets patterns of discrimination and inequality by providing universal benefits that reduce economic disparities and support marginalized families.

Output 1.2. Integrated care management through improved gender sensitive outreach and effective use of electronic registers.	2	By improving care management and outreach, this output ensures that all individuals, particularly marginalised groups, have access to essential health and social services. It upholds the right to health and social care, promoting inclusivity and reducing disparities in service provision. This output promotes the right to health and social care by ensuring all individuals, particularly marginalised groups, have access to essential services. The output is guided by recommendations from the CRC and other human rights mechanisms to improve social protection and health services. It addresses inequalities in access to care services, particularly benefiting women, the elderly, and rural populations.
Output 1.3. Capacitated workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men	2	Building a skilled workforce for social care services enhances the quality and accessibility of care, upholding the right to health and social services. The output supports the right to decent work and quality social services by building a skilled workforce to deliver these services. It aligns with ILO conventions on decent work, promoting international labor standards. By involving social care workers and local officials in training and capacity building, it ensures the participation of those responsible for service delivery.
Output 2.1. Integrated employment and skills development services delivered in partnership with targeted municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment.	2	Integrating employment and skills development services ensures that marginalized and marginalised groups have access to job training and employment opportunities, upholding the right to work. This output promotes equal access to economic opportunities and supports the realization of decent work for all. It is informed by international labor standards and UPR recommendations on employment and skills development. The output specifically targets gender disparities in the labor market, ensuring women and youth receive necessary training and support.
Output 2.2. Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector.	2	Integrated services addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector protects workers' rights by ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and job security. This output directly supports the right to just and favourable working conditions and combats exploitation in the informal economy. It adheres to ILO conventions on decent work and recommendations from the UPR on labor conditions. The output focuses on improving working conditions for women and informal workers, reducing exploitation and promoting fair wages.
Output 2.3. Integrated case management in targeted municipalities/regions for activating social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.	2	Integrated case management for NE individuals supports human rights by providing tailored assistance to those excluded from education, employment, and training. This output ensures that marginalised individuals receive the support they need to access their rights to education, work, and social inclusion. By involving local stakeholders and beneficiaries in the design and implementation, it ensures meaningful engagement and tailored interventions.

Sustaining Peace Marker *(optional- please only fill out if you added the marker to the workplan above)*

Please copy the output/outcomes as per in the workplan and add the Sustaining Peace marker score justify the scoring. Please refer to the UNSDG guidance here: Please refer to the UNSDG guidance here: <https://help.uninfo.org/un-info/results-framework/results-framework-structure/suboutput-level/guidance-on-applying-tags-and-markers/guidance-on-applying-the-gender-equality-human-rights-and-sustaining-peace-markers>

Joint Programme Outputs	SPM Score	Justification
Output 1.1. Developed gender-responsive scenarios and operational mechanisms for Universal Child Benefits, ensuring equitable access and benefits for all children, with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalized communities.		
Output 1.2. Integrated care management through improved gender sensitive outreach and effective use of electronic registers.		
Output 1.3. Capacitated workforce engaged in delivering new social care services models, ensuring that services address the specific needs of both women and men		
Output 2.1. Integrated employment and skills development services delivered in partnership with targeted municipalities/regions, non-public providers, and employers in Hospitality and Tourism, <i>ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and addressing gender-specific barriers to employment.</i>		
Output 2.2. Enhanced gender-sensitive services and employment protection addressing decent work deficits in the tourism sector		
Output 2.3. Integrated case management in targeted municipalities/regions for activating social assistance beneficiaries, addressing the specific needs of young women and other marginalized groups.		

ANNEX 7: Overview of the Learning and capacity building plan for the main stakeholders, including social partners and civil society

Scope of the Plan:

To sustain a transformative focus, the joint programme will continuously support learning and capacity development across all stakeholders, including the UNCT, government, social partners, civil society, and others. The plan is centred around enhancing capacities for:

1. System change and strategic foresight/planning to anticipate and shape systemic changes by enhancing capabilities in foresight and strategic planning;
2. Convening and partnership development to build and maintain robust partnerships across various sectors;
3. Fostering a collaborative approach to achieving joint goals to streamline and integrate services, focusing on effective management and delivery that meets the needs of the community; and at the same time
4. Embedding cultural changes in attitudes, practices, and social norms to foster thought-leadership that drives transformation, to foster a culture of innovation, proactive change, and collaborative leadership across all stakeholders, emphasizing sustainable and inclusive practices.

The programme implementation strategy combines a mix of approaches to deliver the support/ achieve the intended results: (1) direct policy advice/ technical guidance; (2) Capacity building; (3) Direct demonstration of pilot models; (4) the empowerment of marginalised groups and their civil organizations; (5) knowledge generation/ sharing; (6) national and local advocacy.

Objectives and main activities

Key skills & capabilities	Main activities	Target group	Responsibility	Monitoring
1. System change and strategic foresight/planning	- Direct policy advice/technical guidance on Universal child benefit and LTC - Knowledge generation and sharing on constraints hindering retention of decent jobs and strategies to address identified issues - Direct demonstration of pilot incentives for enterprise formalisation and incentives to for gender inclusive workplace practices.	Government institutions at the central level, UNCT	UNICEF UNDP ILO	- Minutes of meetings and workshops where knowledge products are discussed.
2. Convening and partnership development	- Direct demonstration of pilot models integrating long term care with community employment and training programme - Direct demonstration of pilot models of employment and skills development programmes delivered in partnership with non-public actors	Government institutions at the central and local level, UNCT	UNDP	Capitalization reports Project progress reports Field visits
3. Fostering a collaborative approach to achieving joint goals	- Capacity building on Integrated Care Services; Integrated Case Management, Guidance and Counselling and Placement; Long Term Care services	Government institutions at the local level, private	UNDP UNICEF	Training reports Training material List of participants

	- Knowledge generating and sharing by Scaling up Communities of practices among front line staff who deliver care services, employment services, VET in public and non-public providers. - Direct demonstration of developing and implementing integrated service and outreach plans	sector, social partners, civil society, UNCT.		
4. Embedding cultural changes in attitudes, practices, and social norms	- Work with civil society organisation to reach out to marginalised groups - Empower marginalised groups by deploying mobile units for skills development and job placement services - Direct demonstration of early warning systems to prevent school dropout.	Government institutions at the local level, private sector, social partners, civil society, UNCT	UNICEF UNDP ILO	Outreach activities conducted Project progress reports

ANNEX 8: Overview of the Communications and visibility plan

Overall narrative

The joint programme is designed to transform Albania's social protection system, providing comprehensive lifecycle support during transitions between education, training, employment, and care. By focusing on systemic changes and leveraging catalytic interventions, the programme aims to enhance child benefits, family support, and social care services while accelerating labour market activation for marginalised groups. Through collaboration with government entities, social partners, and civil society, the programme will contribute to sustainable social and economic development, aligned with the SDGs. The initiative emphasizes innovative solutions and local implementation to ensure scalable and lasting impact across the nation. It builds upon the vast experience of the UN agencies in addressing social protection and employment needs of the marginalised groups in Albania. By integrating the Accelerator's objectives, the programme aims to develop sustainable financing mechanisms, inclusive social protection policies, and robust employment strategies. It leverages partnerships with government entities, social partners, and civil society to implement targeted interventions that address key barriers to employment and social protection for marginalised groups.

Objectives and main activities

The Strategy aims to reach the following target audiences: Affected communities in the programme areas; Central Government; Local Government; International and local development partners; Civil society organizations; International, local and national media; private sector, VET providers, Albanian society.

Communication Objectives	Activities and tools	Budget	Timeframe
1. Raise Awareness and Understanding of the Joint Programme's Goals and Benefits	<i>1.1 Design and develop project identity and branding</i> <i>1.2. Organize national launching event</i> <i>1.3. Produce factsheets/infographics on project interventions and results.</i> <i>1.4. Organize two media trips to promote models of intervention</i> <i>1.5. Create a project page on the website of the lead agency and social media channels of all participating UN Agencies to provide updates and resources. Use social media to promote project events (Twitter, Facebooks, YouTube, Instagram, podcasting, blogs)</i>	10,000	Month 1-24
2. Promote inclusive participation and ownership among programme beneficiaries	2.1. Conduct outreach sessions in rural and marginalised communities to inform and engage beneficiaries about opportunities and support mechanisms. Use local TV. 2.2. Develop and broadcast at least 4 short video-documentaries to promote social inclusion/successful individual cases.	10,000	Month 4 - 24

	2.3. Run campaigns focusing on empowering women and youth through success stories, mentorship programmes, and skill development opportunities. 2.4. Implement feedback mechanisms such as surveys and suggestion boxes to continuously gather input from beneficiaries.		
3. Enhance visibility and support among national and international stakeholders and partners:	3.1. <i>Ensure visibility of any important roundtables, capacity building events, conference, communities of practices, and public talks</i> 3.2. Organise field visits to project areas for donor and international partners detailing progress, challenges, and impact, and showcase impact on the lives and livelihoods of final beneficiaries. 3.3. Engage in policy advocacy to promote the integration of successful programme elements into national policies and strategies. 3.4. <i>ensure visibility of any important multi-stakeholder coordination forums to present policy briefs</i>	10,000	Month 4 - 24

This communication action plan will be applicable during all the project implementations. The messages techniques and tools suggested have been made taking into account specific needs and absorption capacity of the main stakeholders at this stage. If necessary, adjustment should be made through annual action plans and partial or thorough revision at the moment when major milestones in the integration process have been achieved.

UN Agencies, with UNDP leadership and the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation should be in charge of carrying out this communication plan, monitoring its implementation and measuring the fulfilment of the set targets. The Project Manager will be responsible for ensuring communication/visibility actions are taking place in line with the plan (costs attributed to the Action). UN Resident Coordinator and PUNOs Heads for participation in events to ensure high level visibility. UNDP Communication Officer in close cooperation with RCO and communication colleagues from PUNOS will follow up on the implementation of this communication plan.

Although UNDP will take the lead in this communication programme, inclusion of the other UN/ partner agencies, a multitude of many local communication partners and other “actors” is key to successful implementation. As far as possible, marginalised communities should feel that they have “ownership” of the process and results achieved by the project. A wide range of sources of information is crucial – under the condition that they do not contradict or simply duplicate each other. Effective communication coordination is essential. This is the basic framework of the so-called “multiplier approach” to communication, which consists of relaying messages to final destination target audiences via intermediary “opinion multipliers” – people and bodies to whom others look to for reliable information, such as political representatives, the media, academics, local organization, civil society and so on. Working with and through opinion multipliers is therefore a central pillar of this Communication Strategy.

Monitoring progress for communication activities: Progress will be monitored through regular reports and stakeholder feedback. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will include media reach, stakeholder engagement, beneficiary participation, and policy integration. Regular updates will be shared with all stakeholders to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.