

# IN DEPTH: DELIVERING RESULTS FOR ALBANIA



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



UNITED NATIONS  
ALBANIA

PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2017-2021

## Progress Report 2020

1 NO  
POVERTY



2 ZERO  
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION



8 DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



## OUTCOME 1

# Governance and Rule of Law

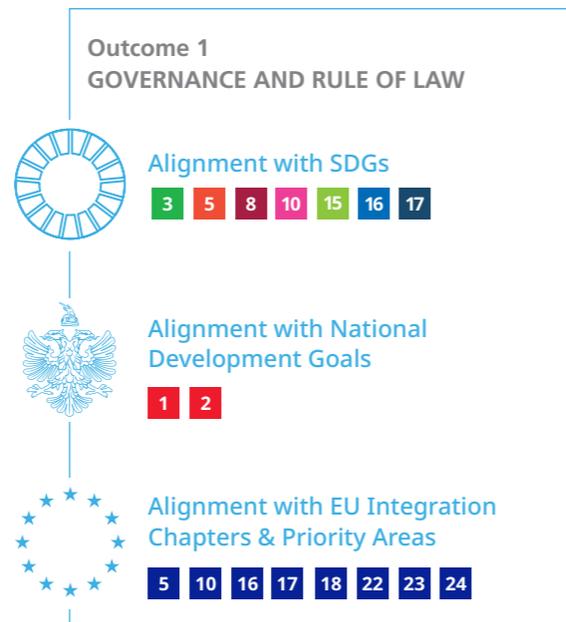
State and civil society organisations perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards.

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

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

The total budget available for implementation of Outcome 1 in 2020 was USD 10 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Albania, Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as the European Union, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and other miscellaneous donors. The outcome delivery was 64 percent.

Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that out of 40 targets, 34 (85%) are on track, two (5%) are partially on track, and four (10%) have not progressed. For further details on progress made against the indicators please see Annex A of the present report.



## Outcome 1 delivery (USD million), 2020



## INDICATOR

INDICATOR	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2020
↑ % women in government ministerial positions	MPs 21% Municipal Councillors, 35% Public Sector, 44.6%	MPs, 29.5% Municipal Councillors, 43.7% Public Sector, 55%
↑ Perceptions of performance of public institutions	Parliament 10% Government 14% Local Government 13%	Parliament, 24.2% Government, 36.4% Local Government, 41.6%
↓ Rate of children in detention (per 100,000 population aged 14–17)	33.3	13.2
↑ No. of seizures by PCU	60%	80%
↑ No. LGUs operating OSS for service delivery	3	59
↑ No of municipal action plans that have a budget line for youth, including education and SRH	0	15
↑ No. LGUs with a physical archiving system and increased capacities, legal knowledge and skills on physical archiving.	0	61
↑ No. LGUs with web pages meeting transparency legal requirements	21	61
↑ No. LGUs implementing the transparency performance measurement system	0	61
↑ No. LGUs publishing Council Decisions online	27	61
↑ Existence of legislation that recognises a child's right to be heard in civil and administrative proceedings that affect them (in line with Article 12 of the CRC)	1 Law	5 Laws
↑ No. Free Legal Aid Centers at District Court level to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice to the most vulnerable persons	0	8
↑ Extent of gender mainstreaming in the central budgeting process	24 MTBPs	38
↑ No. GoA draft policies, strategies and plans engendered	2	5
↑ No. municipalities adopting and implementing gender-responsive MTBP	3	10
↑ Reception capacities at the border increased, with a differentiated approach for women and children at risk.	1 centre	2 centres established for women and children at risk (at least 15 persons)
↑ No. of measures of Action Plan of National Strategy on Migration Governance implemented	3	10 measures fully implemented, 29 under implementation, 12 partially implemented.

## OUTPUT 1.1 - HUMAN RIGHTS

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



### Contributing UN Agencies

UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR



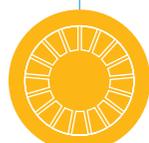
### Contributing Partners

Governments of UK, Norway, Sweden



### Financial Amount (USD)

636, 642



### Alignment with SDGs

**Goals:** 5, 16, 17

**Targets:** 5.5, 16.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.b, 17.18

## Implementation Progress

UN agencies' support in 2020 aimed to advance and mainstream human rights and improve the role of institutions responsible for overseeing their application, and CSOs to strengthen monitoring and accountability of these institutions.

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and state institutions will be able to provide evidence-based reporting, advocacy and policy dialogue supported by data collection that focuses on human rights thanks to the signing in September of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the People's Advocate (PA) and INSTAT, facilitated by UNFPA in cooperation with OHCHR, and the drafting of ToR by UNFPA and PA to improve the data collection system DocuLive. In addition, INSTAT published 'Children, Adolescents and Youth-Focused Well-being Indicators', supported by UNICEF with contributions from the government of Switzerland, marking the starting point in improving the official statistics around children, adolescents and youth in Albania, including those reporting on progress with regard to SDG indicators. Meanwhile, the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection set up a Visualisation Platform for 58 child-specific statistics, aiming to enhance the accountability of relevant institutions to report quality statistics on children and adolescents.



"CONSUMERS IN NEED" ARE BETTER PROTECTED FROM DISCRIMINATION

The annual Human Rights Academy, with the theme 'Covid-19 and Human Rights', organised by UNFPA and the Albanian Human Rights Group, addressed issues on (i) LGBTI rights in times of the pandemic, (ii) policies on gender equality (especially the role of men in relation to this phenomenon during the pandemic), and (iii) mental health of young people during the pandemic. The outcome was the preparation of a policy paper by the Academy that focused on the response of state institutions to engage actively young people in civic participation.

UN Women in collaboration with the Dutch Embassy and Civil Society supported the drafting of the second monitoring report of the National Action Plan on Implementation of Resolution 1325 that will serve to inform the drafting of the second National Action Plan. The report shows that 86 percent of plan has been achieved. UNICEF, with

contributions from the government of Norway to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, supported the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) to compile a draft Implementation Report on the National Action Plan for the Right of the Child 2016–2020, to be finalised early in 2021, combined with an analysis of the situation of children and adolescents, serving as the cornerstone by government to prepare the new National Action Plan for Children.

In 2020, through contributing to the achievement of SDG targets 10.3, 16.3 and 16.a, UNDP and UNICEF laid the solid foundations for an effective institutional cooperation with the People's Advocate and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) to improve access to justice for vulnerable and marginalised groups, through the following:

- With contribution from the government of Norway, CPD increased its outreach to vulnerable groups, as customers of services provided under domestic laws, especially in remote areas, to address challenges to equal and unhindered access to basic services. This was enabled through the conducting of a study on ‘customers in need status’ covering eight municipalities,<sup>1</sup> supported by UNDP in cooperation with local grass-root organisations. The action will serve to initiate approval of by-laws complementing the Law ‘On the Electricity Service’ to determine the status of ‘Customer in Need’ for marginalised minority groups such as Roma and Egyptians.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, 407 vulnerable individuals from Roma and Egyptian families in need in the eight municipalities were informed of this CPD initiative and the advocacy campaign undertaken by grass-roots organisations.
- With contribution from the government of Austria, UNDP supported the PA in providing remedies and upholding human rights standards and gender considerations through development and implementation of a joint UNDP-PA work plan to support the PA in (i) strengthening dialogue with the public administration in ensuring implementation of the PA’s recommendations, (ii) reaching out to vulnerable communities, with a keen focus on women, Persons with Disability, Roma and Egyptians, and LGBTI to encourage their use of the PA in seeking redress for violations of human rights of women and men, and (iii) strengthening the policy framework in fighting all forms of harassment and sexual harassment in the public administration. In addition, with UNDP



support, the PA is developing a national study on minimum subsistence, to help responsible state institutions respond accordingly to its recommendations, that is expected to be launched in early 2021.

With contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway to Children’s Access to Justice, the SDG Acceleration Fund (with contributions from the Embassy of Norway) and UNICEF Thematic Funds on Education, UNICEF supported the People’s Advocate and the Child Rights and Promotion Commissioner within the PA’s office in exercising their oversight and remedy-provision functions for violations of child rights. The Ombudsperson’s monitoring of the conditions and treatment of children deprived of their liberty, as well as information and awareness activities in schools during 2019 and 2020, brought directly a 26 percent increase in the number of child rights violations cases handled by this NHRI in

<sup>1</sup> Namely Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Pogradec, Shkoder and Tirane.

<sup>2</sup> It will ensure Roma and Egyptians’ right to access affordable electricity through strengthening the legal framework in fighting all forms of discrimination and inequality in accessing basic services.



THE RIGHT TO ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY FOR ROMA AND EGYPTIAN FAMILIES IN NEED

2019 compared to the previous year. Moreover, the People’s Advocate developed and consulted with children and education professionals a ‘Manual on child rights integration in education curricula’. The PA published its Annual Report (2019), increasing the transparency and awareness of the public, including children, on the work of this NHRI. Investment of People’s Advocate in information, awareness and outreach to children and their families made 2020 the second year in a row (since its establishment in 1999) that the PA received complaints directly from children about violations of their rights. UNICEF, PA, ECARO and the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children initiated a Child Rights Impact Assessment regarding the government’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic, whose results will be shared in 2021 and will enable this NHRI to inform the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the upcoming consideration of Albania’s CRC report, to be prepared in 2021.

The support to the human resources of the Child Rights Section, despite the lower budget this independent institution received in 2020, played a role in the successful application of the People’s Advocate of Albania to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) for maintaining the Status ‘A’ in compliance with the Paris principles, with a positive recommendation of the Sub-Committee on Accreditations. The official granting of Status A is pending upon expiration of the required procedural timeline. This is a direct contribution to the relevant SDG 16 indicator regarding NHRIs.

UNICEF continued to act as an important partner to Albania’s Parliament in strengthening governance for children. In the light of increased risks of online violence and sexual abuse against children, as well as domestic violence, primarily affecting women and children, during the pandemic,

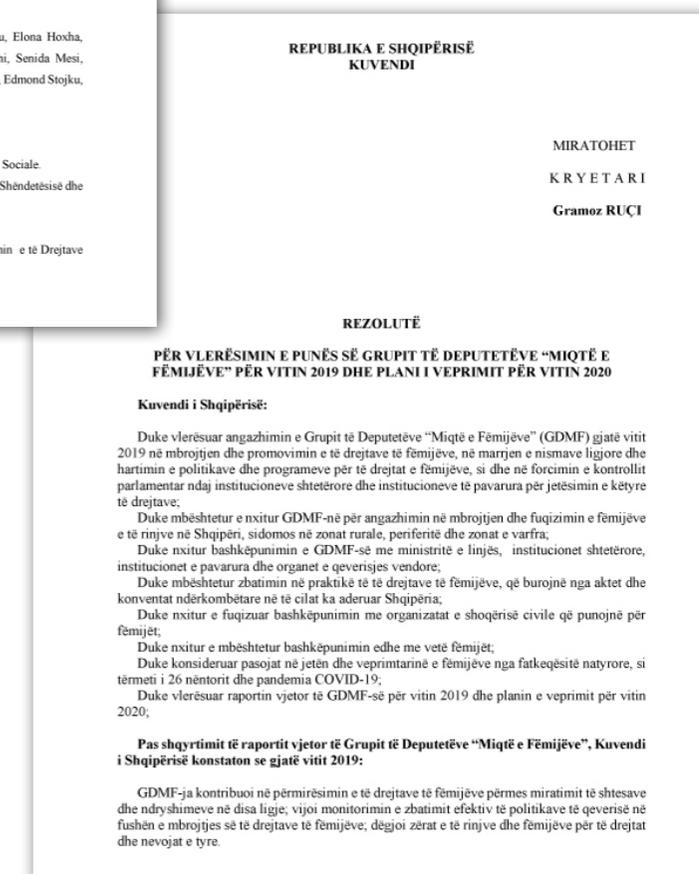
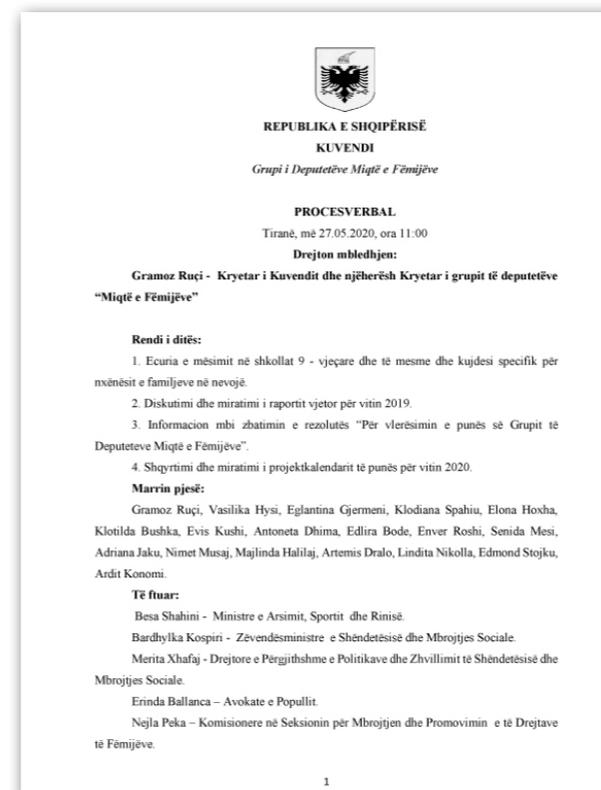
Parliament, with the assistance of UNICEF and contributions from the government of Norway to the Albanian SDG Acceleration Fund, has overseen the government measures and organised two dedicated Parliamentary hearings with Minister of Education, Sports and Youth and Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection regarding the fulfilment of the rights of children, as well as their protection during the pandemic. The PA and the Commissioner for the Promotion and Protection of Child Rights also shared the findings of their monitoring of child rights in the country during natural disasters and recommended legal, policy, administrative and budgetary measures. With UNICEF advocacy in the background, Parliament adopted the Universal Salt Iodisation law, despite strong lobbying from the food processing industry. Stronger awareness of child rights created a critical mass of supporters within Parliament, evident during approval of amendments to the Domestic Violence Law and to the Anti-discrimination Law, designed to increase remedies, protection and services for victims.

UNHCR provided technical comments and recommendations to the Parliamentary Commission on National Security on the draft Law on Citizenship, approved on 29 July by Parliament and entering into force in October. The new law addresses effectively several remaining legislative gaps that had allowed the risk of statelessness in the country. Its alignment with the 1954 and 1961 conventions on Statelessness fulfils one of Albania's pledges at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness. In line with SDG target 16.9, UNHCR and its partner TLAS provided training and engaged 238 key government decision makers on the successes and challenges of implementing the 2018 revised Law on Civil Status. Also, UNHCR assisted with administrative and judicial procedures 470 persons at risk of statelessness (244

of whom have Roma or Egyptian origin) and 342 pro bono lawyers (128% increase from target) trained in the prevention and reduction of statelessness (SDG targets 16.3 and 16.9).

## Implementation Challenges

The Covid-19 lockdown and lesser restrictions impacted the advancement of the work and mobility of all institutions, including NHRIs. Delays were also witnessed on the part of government in relation to courts and legislative processes (e.g. delays in approval of sub-legal acts), which correspondingly led to some postponements in planned UN and partner activities (e.g. related to addressing the risk of statelessness in the country). The PA, CPD, CSOs and other local partners used online platforms and telecommunication to facilitate communication, coordination and implementation of actions and planned interventions. As per UN's global commitment to stay and deliver, the UN agencies' office in Albania reprioritised programming and swiftly implemented Business Continuity Plans for itself and its partners. Alternative modalities for core activities—for instance, remote monitoring of border protection developments—were implemented while travel restrictions remained in place.



## OUTPUT 1.2 - ANTI-CORRUPTION AND RULE OF LAW

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



**Contributing UN Agencies**

UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNODC, IOM



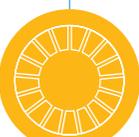
**Contributing Partners**

Governments of Austria, France, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, United States, Turkey, Russia, Germany, the EU, MDTF



**Financial Amount (USD)**

1, 418, 395



**Alignment with SDGs**

**Goals:** 3, 8, 16

**Targets:** 3.5, 3.7, 8.7, 16.3, 16.4, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 16.b

### Implementation Progress

The citizen centric public service delivery advanced with expansion of customer care standards in four additional municipalities (Kolonje, Mat, Pogradec, Roskovec), benefiting more than 119,000 citizens, while similar work began in Tepelene Municipality, supported by UNDP under the ISDA Support project—Innovation against Corruption: Building a Citizen Centric Service Delivery Model in Albania—with contribution from the governments of Austria and Italy. Meanwhile, under the successor of the ISDA Support project, Citizen Centric Public Service Delivery Consolidation in Albania (CSDA),<sup>3</sup> with continuing financing from the Austrian government, co-location of services was enabled in two Citizen Service Centres established by the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services in Albania (ADISA) in Elbasan and Lushnje, bringing the total number of CSCs and LGU co-locations for customer-care service delivery to 18 (reaching 58% of the 2021 PoCSD target, and 100% of the ISDA project target). Work undertaken under both projects contributes to achieving SDG target 16.6.

Under the ISDA Support Project, UNDP also supported ADISA with capacity building for ADISALab on adopting experimentation as a tool for innovation

<sup>3</sup> The ISDA Support Project ended in May 2020, while the CSDA project began implementation in June 2020 and is planned until the end of February 2024.

in improving the quality and access to public services for all citizens in Albania with special focus on women and vulnerable groups. In addition, a comprehensive report of the 2019 Mystery Shopping assessment of the level of compliance with established quality service standards was provided covering 18 key central government institutions in primary focus of the public services reform. The report included recommendations for improvements and identified the winners of the 2019 Public Services Excellence Awards based on the highest Front Office Achievement Scores (FAS). Also, a comprehensive nationwide awareness campaign on the rights of citizens in obtaining public services as mandated by the Citizen Charter was conducted under the slogan: “Citizen Charter, your public service rights!”, accompanied by the call-to-action: “Know, seek and enjoy your rights when obtaining a public service!” The campaign relied on print and video products in a variety of formats and utilisation of various channels to better reach the public. Products included a video spot on the Citizen Charter in sign language and the list of rights in Braille. Citizen Charter information materials were distributed to 425 offices of 18 key central government service providing institutions, all municipality and county main offices, and online.<sup>4</sup>

On the anticorruption front, UNDP’s ISDA Support Project helped strengthen government capacity to prevent and fight corruption through preparation of the Integrity Risk Assessment (IRA) Methodology for central government institutions, and piloting it with the formulation of the Integrity Plan for the Ministry of Justice as National Coordinator against Corruption, the first such plan at the ministerial level in Albania. In addition, the results of the seventh edition of the Trust in Government (TiG) Opinion Poll<sup>5</sup> were reported in May 2020 and indicated that the

<sup>4</sup> [Citizen Charter campaign products webpage](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Presentation of “Trust in Governance 2019” Opinion Poll Findings | UNDP in Albania](#)



PROCURED KITS FOR CSI POLICE OFFICERS



TRAININGS ON TREATMENT OF PERSONS WITH DRUG USE DISORDERS IN ALBANIA

most trusted institutions were religious institutions (65.6%), followed by the army (59.4%), the police (54.6%), educational institutions (57.3%), and health-care institutions (51.4%). Meanwhile, international institutions and organisations such as NATO, the UN and the EU ranked as the most trusted institutions by the vast majority of Albanian citizens, with most perceiving petty corruption (87.5%) and grand corruption (85.2%) as widespread or very widespread in Albanian society.

In the area of Rule of Law, UNDP’s regional SEESAC project ‘Support Albania’s Law Enforcement Authorities to Strengthen Firearms Criminality Evidence Management and Investigation Capacities’

(December 2019–May 2021) supported the Albanian State Police in enhancing its capacities in the area of criminal investigation. The project was undertaken in the framework of the Western Balkans Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition, with contributions from the government of Germany. It included the development and amendment of standard operating procedures (SOPs) in use by CSI police officers, and the provision of several individual and laboratory equipment for the CSI officers and the ballistic analysis.

The UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (2020–2023) continued to support the government of Albania in UNODC-mandated areas and towards the relevant SDGs. The support included the following:

- Evidence containers were donated to the Albanian State Police, further strengthening the capacities of Albanian law enforcement to address drug trafficking and other forms of organised crime and carry out the related investigations and proceedings while contributing to SDG 16.4.
- In the field of border control, the government's capacity was strengthened by the official opening of an Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) at Tirana International Airport and capacity building of this ACCU and the already established Port Control Unit (PCU) in Durres through regular mentoring and training. As a result, seven training courses for 55 participants were carried out in 2020. Durres PCU seized 37.55 kg of heroin, 25.5 kg of marijuana, more than one million cases of cigarettes (21 million cigarettes) and a stolen a vehicle. At TIA, ACCU seized 64,000 undeclared Euro, 70,200 undeclared British Pounds, 9.52 kg of smuggled gold and 4 kg of shotgun cartridges. UNODC donated operational equipment to PCU and ACCU, including 20 container trackers and

GPS, and one vehicle, aiming to support their work and the enforcement interventions. These interventions and donations were carried out under the UNODC–World Customs Organisation (WCO) Container Control Programme (CCP) and the UNODC Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe, with contributions from the governments of France and Germany.

- In the area of reduction of drug demand, UNODC supported, with contributions from the government of the USA, the organisation of two Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) training workshops,<sup>6</sup> aimed at building international treatment capacity through training. This support thus expanded the professional global treatment workforce, contributing towards SDG 3.5 on strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol. The five-day walkthrough trainings were funded by the Drug Advisory Programme (DAP) of the Colombo Plan, Chilean Office, and coordinated by the University of California San Diego. It uses the UTC training package as the internationally certified compendium of evidence-based services and information for the skills development of treatment professionals.
- UNODC's Global Firearms Programme and UNODC's regional project on 'Criminal Justice Response to Arms Trafficking', which is supported by Germany, UK, Netherlands, France, Sweden and Norway under the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund, developed a legislative gap analysis report for Albania. The report highlighted the challenges in implementing the UN Firearms Protocol and resulted in the preparation of amendments to the Criminal Code, and the overhaul and harmonising of all criminal provisions linked to firearms with

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.issup.net/files/2020-11/202010\\_UNODC.UTC\\_Report\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.issup.net/files/2020-11/202010_UNODC.UTC_Report_WEB.pdf)

Article 5 of the UN Firearms Protocol. Similarly, UNODC developed a case law report that identified the challenges in investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking cases, contributing to the harmonisation of court practices in adjudicating firearms related cases. In addition, UNODC carried out a virtual assessment of the state of play of illicit trafficking in cultural objects in the Western Balkans, including Albania, in order to identify challenges and potential areas for the agency's involvement in supporting institutional and legislative capacities. The results are linked to SDG 16, target 16.4: by 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organised crime.

The National Coordinator and Director of the Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism (CCCVE), in coordination with countries in the region and supported by IOM,<sup>7</sup> strengthened the capacity of the Centre to prepare the return and reintegration action plan for returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and their families, including reflections in the plan of their direct experience with returnees and related challenges and lessons learnt, and to provide services. Following the return (end October) of five Albanian citizens from Syria (one woman and four children), CCCVE and three line ministries<sup>8</sup> were supported to provide rehabilitation and reintegration services.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a Communication Plan for CCCVE was finalised through a consultative process

<sup>7</sup> Under the framework of two regional projects: 1, Supporting Western Balkan Governments in Preventing and Responding to Challenges Related to Violent Extremism and Returnees from Conflict Zones, funded by the government of Netherlands; and 2, Building Institutional Capacity in the Western Balkans to deal with challenges related to reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees from conflict zones, funded by the EU.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Education.

<sup>9</sup> Counselling on minimizing the consequences of violence and positive parenting, employment and microbusinesses, among others.

with the Centre and line ministries. Meanwhile, the capacities of CCCVE were strengthened for implementing, monitoring and evaluating project activities undertaken with third partners and for developing long-term activities on behalf of the Centre, serving to realise the CVE National Action Plan. Planning for the best approaches to engage in Private Public Partnerships is currently ongoing between IOM and the National Coordinator and Director of CCCVE.

IOM supported<sup>10</sup> the Office of the National Coordinator against Trafficking in Person (ONAC) to i) enhance implementation of Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims or Potential Victims of Trafficking during the pandemic, ii) operationalise the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Agreement, ensuring the Responsible Authority is proactive in times of pandemic in referring returned victims of trafficking to the respective protection and reintegration services, and iii) regularly enter and manage the National Database. Twelve Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees (RATCs) are established and have been actively engaged in prevention work during the year.

## Implementation Challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic revealed that air cargo carriers have a major role to play in the logistics supply chain to ensure that essential equipment and supplies reach their intended destination. The situation also solidified the role of the newly established ACCU at the only international airport in Albania. Current trends indicate that growth in air cargo volume will require more streamlined risk analysis to improve control techniques, delivery and paperwork.

<sup>10</sup> Under the framework of the projects Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (regional) and Preventing Unsafe Migration from Albania towards the European Union Member States – Follow-up Campaign (national).

## OUTPUT 1.3 - LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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



### Implementation Progress

UNDP's assistance in advancing local governance reforms, consolidating and expanding systems in place and promoting evidence-based analysis continued throughout 2020, overcoming the difficulties of transition from the conclusion of the STAR-2 project in March 2020 to the start of the new phase STAR-3 in September 2020, and restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Key results achieved in 2020 by STAR-2 included:

- The One-Stop Shop Information System (OSSIS) was made operational in 15 additional municipalities,<sup>11</sup> bringing the total number of municipalities supported by UNDP to 48 and reducing the overall gap of municipalities not using an OSSIS to only two.
- In a replication of the first round held in 2017, the Second Local Governance Mapping<sup>12</sup> was carried out during January–March 2020, allowing for a comparative analysis of the progress made by LGUs in the four assessed dimensions in the first post-Territorial Administrative Reform mandate. An aggregate report with a comparative analysis of findings was published, indicating that out of the four governance dimensions, municipalities fare better in Effectiveness and Efficiency, jumping from 60 to 64 out of 100 points in 2020, followed

<sup>11</sup> Diber, Finiq, Fushe-Arrez, Gjirokaster, Himare, Kelcyre, Kucove, Mirdite, Peqin, Prrenjas, Puke, Roskovec, Selenice, Tirane and Vlore.

<sup>12</sup> Second Local Governance Mapping in Albania is a national survey combining citizens' perceptions and municipal officials' accounts across four Good Governance dimensions: Effectiveness and Efficiency, Transparency and Rule of Law, Accountability and Participation & Citizens Engagement. Local Governance Mapping in Albania 2020 | UNDP in Albania

by Transparency and Rule of Law, marking an improvement from 56 to 59, while Accountability and Participation, and Citizens Engagement remained at their previous levels, with scores of 59 and 50, respectively. Due to the Covid-19 situation in the country, the results were disseminated through two on-line events: with international partner agencies, and with 61 mayors, CSOs and other relevant national stakeholders.

The new project STAR-3, Sustaining and Advancing Local Governance Reform, started in September 2020, aiming to address key needs related to decentralisation and local governance reform, expanding and consolidating achievement of STAR-2 in areas of local democracy, systems and standards for service delivery and central government capacities for driving decentralisation and local governance reform processes, closely linked with the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Decentralisation and Local Governance. The Youth Voice CSO platform expanded to 15 municipalities in 2020, advocating on six issues at the municipal level, supported by UNFPA, including: (i) encouraging the participation of young people in democratic processes and decision making, (ii) implementation of the actions foreseen in the Social Care Plan compiled in several municipalities in the country in relation to the promotion of employment of young women and young people through effective labour market policies, (iii) encouraging the involvement of young people in environmental activities, (iv) encouraging the involvement of young people in artistic and cultural activities, (v) encouraging the involvement of young people in health education activities, and (vi) encouraging the involvement of young people in activities to achieve the SDGs. Fifteen Action Plans and Budget for Youth<sup>13</sup> (reaching 100%

<sup>13</sup> Compiled for 15 municipalities: Belsh, Diber, Durres, Fier, Korce, Kruje, Lezhe, Maliq, Permet, Pogradec, Roskovec, Shijak, Shkoder, Tirane and Ura Vajgurore, Albanian: [https://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/al-Permbledhje-Nevojat-e-te-rinjve\\_Dhjetor2020.pdf](https://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/al-Permbledhje-Nevojat-e-te-rinjve_Dhjetor2020.pdf) English: [https://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/en-Summary-Young-people-needs\\_Dec2020.pdf](https://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/en-Summary-Young-people-needs_Dec2020.pdf)

of the planned target) were compiled, with UNFPA support, at the municipal level reflecting the Youth Voice platform advocacy. Four monitoring reports on the implementation of the budget plan for youth were conducted at the municipal level (Durres, Fier, Korce and Permet), assessing the progress of implementation of the budget plan for youth at the local level, but also measuring and evaluating the approach of the new law on youth implemented in local policies.

The online media platform Jo Tabu (<https://jotabu.al/>) on young people's Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) issues was further strengthened nationally, with UNFPA support, reaching out to more than 150,000 young people (6–29 years of age). A new partnership was established in 2020 between UNFPA and Euronews Albania to inform on two issues: (i) Covid-19 regular updated information,<sup>14</sup> and (ii) the parent-adolescent series Jo Tabu, which included stories and discussion on adolescent SRH and rights.<sup>15</sup>

### Implementation Challenges

Difficulties were faced in the conclusion of planned activities of the STAR-2 project, the last month of which coincided with the Covid-19 lockdown of Albania and delay in initiation of STAR-3. Covid-19 restrictions impacted the pace of expansion of municipal OSSs and the related field work. Adapting to a new working regime of remote work, the activities continued throughout the summer with a reduced face-to-face format and increased field reporting, also relying on analysis of data generated by the OSS system to spot issues and orient the focus.

<sup>14</sup> <https://euronews.al/al/covid-19/2020/04/01/organizata-jo-fitimprurese>

<sup>15</sup> <https://euronews.al/al/search/?keyword=jo+tabu>

## OUTPUT 1.4 - ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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



### Implementation Progress

The jurisdictions of Berat and Gjirokaster, assisted by UNICEF and its partner Save the Children, with contribution from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, built an inter-disciplinary practice of case management for children in conflict or contact with the law, benefitting 296 children with free legal assistance, psychosocial counselling, restorative justice services, economic reintegration support, and referral to service providers, 204 parents with positive parenting programmes, and 62 professionals with training in inter-sectoral case management for children in conflict or contact with the law. Aiming towards sustainability, UNICEF's work with authorities of these two jurisdictions also focused on developing tools and practices of working together in a cross-disciplinary fashion. As a result, thirteen state public agencies<sup>16</sup> signed a Justice for Children (J4C) MoU in Berat and Gjirokaster, committing to the inter-disciplinary case management and planning a set of services tailored to children in conflict and contact with the law. Advocating for national replication, UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) organised an online conference, in which 96

<sup>16</sup> These were the signatories of the J4C MoUs: municipalities of Berat and Gjirokaster; Regional Police Departments; Judicial District Courts; Judicial District Prosecution Offices; local Bailiffs Service; Medico-Legal Institute (national); local Bar Association Branch; Order of Psychologists (national); Chamber of Mediators (national); Public Health Department of Berat and of Gjirokaster; State Social Services Department; local Education Department; Regional Department of Employment and Skills.

professionals and representatives of public agencies participated, to share lessons learned from these positive experiences. Moreover, for the first time, the Albanian government is able to track children's cases, from the moment they first interact with the police, until the final link in the justice chain. The government is now also able to support inter-agency case management, through infrastructure for the online Integrated System of Data on Criminal Justice for Children ([www.drejtisipertemitur.gov.al](http://www.drejtisipertemitur.gov.al)) set up by MoJ and six state public agencies,<sup>17</sup> supported by UNICEF with contribution from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

With UNICEF support and contributions from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the 'Access to Justice for Children' regional project, the UK government, as part of the global 'Eliminate Violence against Children' and local 'Ending Human Trafficking in and from Albania' projects, and the government of Norway, through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, seven out of twelve regional police departments established child-friendly interview units.<sup>18</sup> These units are set up to ensure recording and reduce the number of times children will be interviewed, as part of criminal justice or domestic violence processes, with 20 police officers trained in the use of the equipment and the spaces. In addition, at least 200 attorneys, prosecutors, police officers and other professionals involved in legal processes affecting children were informed on the new normative framework on justice for children through relevant information published or provided by UNICEF. Thanks to UNICEF technical support and advocacy, Albania has increased by 1,092 percent

<sup>17</sup> For the first time, the professionals in the justice system—MoJ (and the Centre for Prevention or Juvenile Criminality within it), the court, prosecution, Probation Service, General Directorate of Prisons, and police—will interact with each other through the Integrated Criminal Justice for Children Data System.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF Shqipëri inauguron Dhomën Miqësore për Intervistimin e Femijëve për Policinë e Shtetit në Komisariatin e Policisë Korçë



DURING A COUNSELLING SESSION IN THE FREE LEGAL AID CENTER IN FIER

the number of magistrates tasked with justice for children cases (from 12 in 2018 to 143 in 2020).

Under the UNICEF-UK government two-year programme 'Ending Human Trafficking in and from Albania', the content of the training to the law-enforcement and justice system professionals, one of a kind large simulation-based training that will engage all actors in early identification of human trafficking, all the way to court proceedings, was completed and approved.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, two training courses are in preparation for the Security Academy and the School of Magistrates. The Security Academy has already approved the structure of the new anti-trafficking training curriculum that will be made available during 2021, while the School of

<sup>19</sup> The training was developed through the continued guidance of the international experts, as well as through the in-kind expertise and leadership of the Presence and the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR-CTHB).



UNDP HAS SO FAR ASSISTED 616 PEOPLE TO HAVE UNHINDERED AND EQUAL ACCESS TO FREE LEGAL AID SERVICES AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT



BIRTH REGISTRATION IS ONE OF THE TOP CASES HANDLED BY THE FLA CENTERS

Magistrates has confirmed the enrolment of the training<sup>20</sup> for judges and prosecutors in its Continuous Education Calendar for 2020–2021. Other results from the project include: 231 beneficiaries (208 children, 21 mothers, 2 fathers) receiving immediate protection support, safe transportation and shelter, 208 children assisted with emergency services (60% of which needed emergency child protection support at police stations, and 37% needed also safe shelter services), and 27 children identified as unaccompanied minors at risk of trafficking, coming from Egypt, Palestine and Syria into Albanian territory and accommodated at an emergency shelter in cooperation with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, and Border and Migration Police.

<sup>20</sup> The training consists of 11 chapters, which cover the international and national legal framework on criminal justice aspects to trafficking in human beings, which will be made available during 2021.

Supported by UNDP with contribution from the Austrian Development Agency, the capacities of the MoJ Free Legal Aid Directorate were strengthened for developing a coordination and communication protocol, expected to be finalised in 2021, among FLA service providers, for both primary and secondary legal aid, aiming at effective FLA law implementation and quality FLA services. In addition, six FLA centres are operational and functioning in Durres, Fier, Lezhe, Peshkopi, Pogradec and Shkoder, benefiting 1,322 persons in need<sup>21</sup> with free primary and secondary FLA services in a non-

<sup>21</sup> Persons with low or no income have benefited the most (568), followed by the elderly (199), members of the Roma and Egyptian communities (145) and gender-based and domestic violence victims (40), to mention a few. A total of 1,210 persons received primary legal service and the services benefited almost equally both genders (women 643, men 679). The top cases demanding free legal aid include divorce, protection orders, birth registrations, alimony benefits, pension benefits, labour disputes, immigration criminal law, social benefits, inheritance cases and property disputes, and from which a considerable number of women and girls have benefited.

disruptive, inclusive and equal manner, even during the Covid-19 lockdown. Also, partnerships between NHRIs and local CSOs were further strengthened in reaching out to remote communities and vulnerable women, men, girls and boys and empowering them with information for redressing their rights. Moreover capacities of local state and CSO FLA service providers (76 junior lawyers, local service providers and CSO representatives from Durres, Fier and Lezhe) were increased for ensuring provision of FLA services to persons in need as per the FLA law, and networking between them expanded. Specific focus on increasing professional capacities of FLA providers was given to issues related to gender-based discrimination and women clients' needs.

In the framework of the national project 'Access to Justice (A2J)', financially supported by the government of Sweden, ILO supported the School of Magistrates in developing an in-service training package on International Labour Standards (ILS) and the amicable labour disputes resolution system (ALDR) for judges and labour law practitioners, aiming to strengthen their capacities for improved implementation and enforcement of fundamental labour rights, as well as an effective use of the ALDR system in Albania.

In response to practical difficulties in the identification and referral of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) at the entry border areas with Greece, highlighting shortcomings in national and central and inter-institutional coordination in this area,<sup>22</sup> UNHCR and UNICEF convened several meetings with the ministries of Interior, and Health and Social Protection, the National Agency for Child Rights and Child Protection, IOM and Caritas Albania to discuss the lack of a specific system for managing the arrival, identification and referral of

<sup>22</sup> In 2020, the arrival of UASC was largely dealt with through ad hoc approaches and solutions (especially in terms of accommodation).

UASC, especially in relation to safe and separate accommodation. Building upon this dialogue, a high-level meeting between key stakeholders was convened in October by the deputy minister of Health and Social Protection, where UNHCR and UNICEF presented a detailed proposal for the setting up of a national UASC protection system that incorporates best interest processes and specialised accommodation. In parallel, UNHCR supported the National Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in Tirana with the refurbishment of accommodation for 30 persons with specific needs (including UASC), as well as a dedicated child-friendly space.

### Implementation Challenges

The vetting process, as part of the justice system reform, impacted the time available and the interest of the magistrates in capacity building. Also, Covid-19 negatively impacted planned interventions related to boosting law enforcement and justice sector capacities. In response, UNICEF prioritised first those professionals less affected by the reform, reserving the support in 2021 to the Magistrates School, employed whenever possible online trainings, and prepared the curricula content for these professionals in support of training institutions.

In response to the lack of adequate systematic oversight mechanisms at the MoJ and the FLA Directorate, which might impact the quality of legal aid services provided to citizens, UNDP is lobbying with the respective authorities to ensure quality management mechanisms for adequate implementation of the FLA law. As sustainable financial and human resources are key for consolidating and scaling up the FLA services to the most vulnerable women and men, UNDP is supporting MoJ to consolidate the piloted FLA centres as a good practice for future steps.

## OUTPUT 1.5 - MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

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



**Contributing UN Agencies**

UN WOMEN, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA



**Contributing Partners**

Governments of Austria, Australia, Sweden



**Financial Amount (USD)**

198, 902



**Alignment with SDGs**

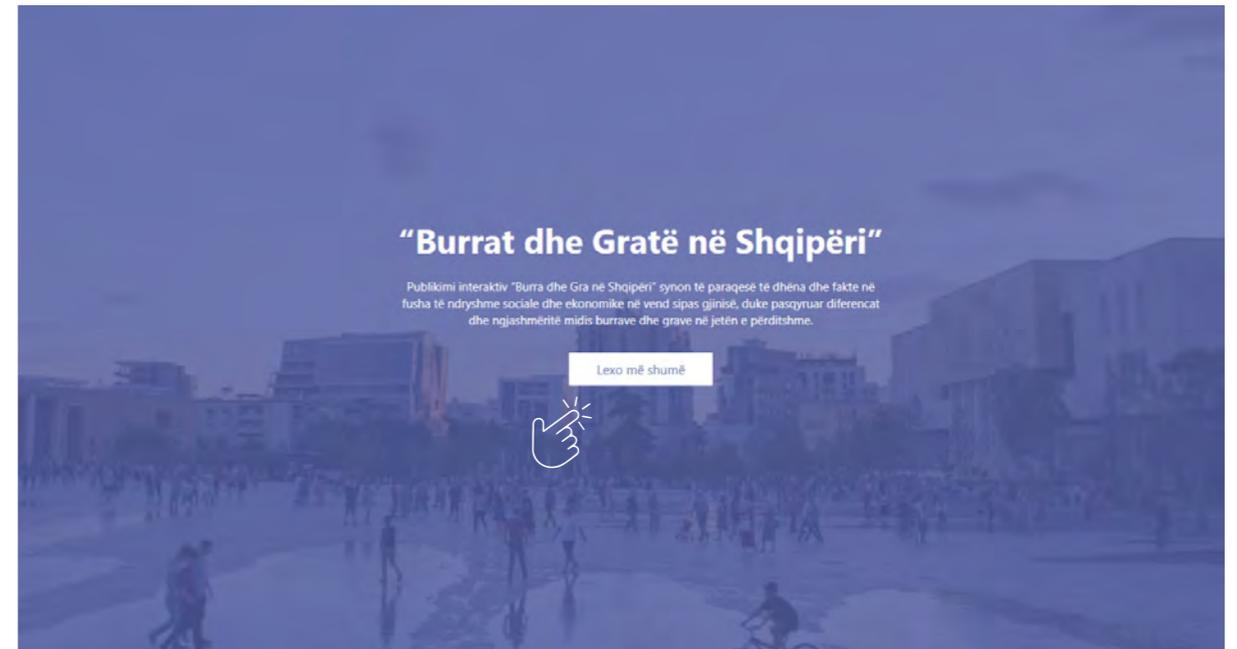
**Goals:** 5, 17

**Targets:** 5.1, 5.4, 5.c, 17.18

### Implementation Progress

With UN Women support under the Regional Programme on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB), with contributions from the government of Sweden, the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) effectively mainstreamed the gender perspective into the MTBP 2021–2023, ensuring that an estimated nine percent of the annual state budget is allocated for gender-specific priorities, compared to seven percent in the previous year. Eleven line ministries and two state institutions prioritised gender-specific objectives, thus including gender key performance indicators and budget allocations in 38 budget programmes in their MTBP 2021–2023 documents. In addition, MoFE issued its second annual Gender-Sensitive Citizen’s budget,<sup>23</sup> demonstrating continued commitment to the inclusion of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics in the budget and informing citizens of next year’s financial plans. Moreover, in view of expanding capacity development and knowledge sharing on GRB in the public administration at the local level, the Albanian School for Public Administration (ASPA) conducted an assessment of LGU training needs, collecting data from more than 120 local administration representatives in 37 municipalities. The assessment will inform future capacity development trainings for local administration on GRB, to be carried in close

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.financa.gov.al/buxheti-i-qytetarit-2/>



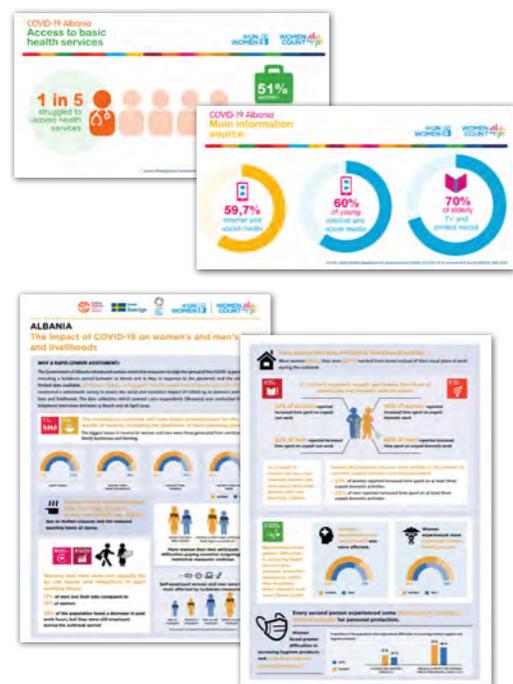
INTERACTIVE “WOMEN AND MEN” PUBLICATION

cooperation with ASPA. An innovation campaign on GRB was also conducted, aimed at improving the understanding that public funds influence the lives of women and men differently, and raising awareness of how all citizens, women and men, can demand accountability and transparency in public spending. The social media campaign reached more than 6,500 people and received more than 400 organic engagements and 4,793 impressions on Twitter. Equally importantly, in support of the development of the new National Strategy on Gender Equality, UN Women through its regional programme is extending support to MoHSP and the inter-institutional working group to conduct a costing of the new Strategy and Action Plan, which will enable timely and informed planning and implementation of the new National Action Plan on GE. To date, Albania has advanced substantially with engenderment of government policies, strategies and plans (150% increase: 5 in 2020, from

2 in 2017)<sup>24</sup> and the number of municipalities with increased capacities to develop a gender-responsive MTBP (233% increase: 10 in 2020, from 3 in 2017). These results contribute towards achievement of SDG target 5.c and 5.4.

With UN Women support under the regional Women Count project, with contributions from the government of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Swedish International Development Agency, INSTAT has included gender statistics in its annual workplan for 2020, focusing on establishing a unique methodology of data collection disaggregated by sex. An assessment of availability of data and sources of SDG gender-related indicators was also completed in 2020 with UN Women technical

<sup>24</sup> Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021–2023; Draft National Strategy on Education, 2021–2026; Strategy on Public Legal Education, 2019–2023, and Action Plan, 2020–2023; Draft MSHP plan for the socio-economic response to Covid-19; Draft NSGE, 2020–2030.



RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19

assistance, resulting in a 550 percent increase (from 4 to 26) in SDG gender-related indicators that can be measured in Albania, which were reflected in the Albanian national report on SDGs prepared by INSTAT. Moreover, gender data and new gender indicators were included in the Women and Men 2020 publication<sup>25</sup> and a network of gender statistics focal points established under the leadership of INSTAT, aiming to improve the coordination of all stakeholders involved in the production and use of gender-related data. Also, the relationship between INSTAT and NHRIs such as the Office of the Ombudsperson was institutionalised, through the signature of an MoU and capacity development, to produce and report gender statistics for human rights.

Under the regional project Expanding Choices through Family-Friendly Policies, funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation, UNFPA carried out a Policy

and Legal Framework Analysis on Gender Responsive Family Friendly Policies, which was launched in partnership with the Parliamentary sub-Commission for Gender Equality and Prevention of Domestic Violence, and developed advocacy products that will be used to raise awareness of policy gaps. In addition, UNFPA prepared a Private Sector Scanning analysis, looking in depth at the family friendly policies and procedures applied by the private sector (evaluating thoroughly 29 out of 100 selected private companies). In 2021, UNFPA will work with nine of these, champion companies, to develop capacities and strengthen their approach to family friendly policies in the workplace, aiming to replicate best practices.

### Implementation Challenges

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic led to reprioritisation and budget cuts and re-allocations across sectors, including in those relevant to advancing gender equality. Given that the budget rebalance has been conducted rapidly to respond to immediate losses caused by the pandemic, no *ex-ante* analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the budget cuts and re-allocations on the lives of women and men. Therefore, UN Women supported sector-wide assessment of the impact of budget cuts and re-allocation on specific gender equality commitments that can guide and inform future interventions on GRB.

In addition, acknowledging the important role of LGUs in the overall response to the pandemic made gender-responsive planning and budgeting even more relevant as a tool for ensuring that the needs of women, especially the most vulnerable, are not marginalised in the response measures. In this respect, the capacity and training needs assessment among LGUs was adjusted to consider also their capacities for devising gender-responsive measures in the context of Covid-19 to address the needs of the most severely affected women and men.

25 <http://www.instat.gov.al/publikimi-interaktiv-burra-dhe-gra/>

## OUTPUT 1.6 - MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

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

- 
**Contributing UN Agencies**  
 UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, UN WOMEN
- 
**Contributing Partners**  
 Governments of Austria, Italy, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, the EU, CEB
- 
**Financial Amount (USD)**  
 5, 654, 249
- 
**Alignment with SDGs**  
**Goals:** 5, 10, 16, 17  
**Targets:** 5.2, 8.7, 10.7, 10.b, 16.2, 16.3, 17.16, 17.18

### Implementation Progress

IOM's support to government on implementation of the National Strategy on Migration (2019–2022) and Action Plan and legislation improvement, resulted in (i) completion of an in-depth institutional assessment, highlighting the need for ensuring good migration governance in Albania, (ii) the start of preparations for development of a migration governance Training of Trainers for government officials, (iii) activation of support, with contributions from GIZ, for the establishment of a Coordination and Monitoring System of the National Strategy on Migration, and (iv) drafting of a new Law on Aliens, with contribution from IPA II regional funding. IOM contributed to the improvement of migration data that can be used for policy development and implementation, with the following: (i) Household Migration Survey completed and published, in cooperation with INSTAT and with contribution from GIZ; and (ii) Data collection finalised on mix migration flows to Albania in the entry and exit land border and continuous assessment of the situation of mixed movements at the border.

The government of Albania and the diaspora engagement institutions were supported by IOM, with contribution from the government of Italy, to implement a comprehensive approach towards the diaspora's engagement for development in line with the overall policy framework. Several results were noted, including, to name a few: (a) Diaspora Mapping and Profile research, completed in five

regions of Italy, as well as in Belgium and France; (b) Connect Albania (CA) Office established, under the Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber; and (c) the Connect Albania investment boosting platform,<sup>26</sup> launched on 18 December, International Migrants Day and National Diaspora day. The campaigns carried out for the promotion of the platform reached more than 450,000 Albanian Diaspora members and entrepreneurs, mainly in Italy. This is the first programme that will serve to bring directly to Albania potential investments through members of the diaspora.

Capacity building of stakeholders at central and local levels to address emergency preparedness and response needs, including for Covid-19, within the current refugee and migrant flows was provided by IOM, with contributions from the Central European Bank and the EU. As a result, a Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre for irregular migrants, with a capacity of 60 persons, was established in Kapshtica, Korce, and two Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centres for irregular migrants in Albania were improved, including conditions for children, women and girls in a vulnerable situation, along with availability and access to sanitary services in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, IOM, with the contribution of the government of the Netherlands, increased awareness and understanding on irregular migration and risks and promoted regular migration through conducting, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and other stakeholders, an awareness-raising campaign entitled Strategy Guide on Preventing Unsafe Migration from Albania towards the European

<sup>26</sup> The 'Connect' idea is based on the central role of the Albanian Diaspora members as Development Agents, who will intermediate and facilitate foreign direct investments to Albania; i.e., will put in contact, accompany and follow-up a foreign direct investment. This is the first programme that will serve directly potential investments through members of the Albanian Diaspora; <https://www.adbc.al/en/connect-albania-eng/>

Union Member States. It also produced visibility and awareness raising materials (100,000 leaflets and 1 video) disseminated also to border and migration authorities and streamed on social media, organised field activities in all regions of the country, jointly with the relevant central and local institutions and communities, and provided counselling on assisted voluntary return and reintegration from Albania to country of origin to 6,165 irregular migrants.

In 2020, as Albania witnessed an increase in the number of arrivals (despite border closures for 2.5 months), but with a noticeable decrease in the number of asylum requests, UNHCR provided practical recommendations to relevant government authorities to ensure access to the asylum procedure was upheld for those in need. In October, UNHCR conducted a survey on access to the asylum procedure in border areas to better understand the current use of the pre-screening procedure and the voluntariness of returns, with key findings being communicated to high-level government and international counterparts in November. In addition, UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior signed an MoU in July, defining closer operational cooperation on all relevant asylum matters in support of Albania's pledges at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum and the High-Level Segment on Statelessness. Also, UNHCR submitted its comments on the draft Law on Asylum to relevant parliamentary commissions in autumn 2020.

With contribution from the government of Norway to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, UNHCR initiated the consultation and drafting of a Strategy on the Integration and Inclusion of Refugees and Persons Granted Protection in Albania, for implementation in 2021. The agency met on several occasions with officials from the European Asylum Support Office in order to discuss complementary priorities and areas of work in relation to the Office's upcoming Albania Roadmap. Meanwhile, 210 UASC were supported

with child-friendly services thanks to UNICEF intervention and support to child protection system strengthening and partnership with UNHCR.<sup>27</sup> Also, 25 UASC were supported by UNICEF and its partners directly, with longer term accommodation and multiple core services lasting for a few months. Some 33 frontline protection workers were supported to better deliver services to vulnerable groups of refugees and migrants, with a focus on UASC and Victims of Trafficking, also with contribution from the UK government. Capacities of Border and Migration Police and other stakeholders in border areas were enhanced, with UN Women support, to ensure that vulnerable groups of irregular migrants arriving in Albania have reinforced access to rights, as well as social and health services.<sup>28</sup> Gaps were identified in the existing legislation regarding access to services for survivors of violence among mix migration flows, and a legal analysis was prepared for consideration by the Albanian government.<sup>29</sup> These results directly contribute to SDG targets 5.2, 8.7, 16.2, 16.3 and 17.18.

<sup>27</sup> These services were delivered with the pro-active engagement of statutory child protection work force from the Greece border adjacent regions of Korce and Gjirokaster and strategic work with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection.

<sup>28</sup> A two-day workshop held jointly with service providers in two border municipalities (Gjirokaster and Korce) highlighted the needs on the ground for those working directly with irregular migrants

<sup>29</sup> The support to the legal and policy framework was carried out both through extensive consultation and expertise sharing with other implementing UN agencies, as well as through operational activities on the ground, where discussion with relevant local stakeholders during scoping missions and round tables revealed a number of legal gaps. In this regard, between September and November 2020, several UN joint field missions were held in the border adjacent areas of Gjirokaster and Korce that assessed the current situation on the identification and referral mechanisms of persons or groups with specific needs, by BMP, as well as the services provided to them by local institutions in the border adjacent area. Findings from the joint missions were used to adapt operational activities and normative support provided to the government. One of the findings of the coordinated missions and round tables organised with local stakeholders in Gjirokaster and Korce, revealed legal gaps that prevent several categories of migrants from accessing services, which was addressed with a thorough legal analysis conducted by the CO and agreed upon with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Another important finding from the ground was the lack of female interpreters and psychologists in the border reception centres, which the CO is addressing in consultation with UNHCR and its partner organisations working at the border.

## Implementation Challenges

Although access to territory was not limited under the State of Natural Disaster, UNHCR and partners observed that it was generally constrained by additional border management measures between March and May 2020. Interceptions and a more systematic use of pre-screening picked up again in May, though with reports of persons (including UASC) being returned to Greece despite having expressed an intention to seek asylum in Albania but with a lack of safeguards in these cases. By the end of the year, only 50 asylum referrals had been made since April, limiting the scope of support that UNHCR and partners were able to provide to asylum seekers present in the country. UNHCR continued to engage and advocate with high-level counterparts in coordination with key international partners (e.g. EU Delegation). However, this in itself was hindered by turnover of some key officials and counterparts at various points in the year.

The Covid-19 emergency also inevitably led to the postponement of some previously planned activities and initiatives for both UNHCR and government counterparts. Various regional (Western Balkan) IPA II activities were postponed to early 2021. These include full implementation of the regional Quality Assurance project aimed at enhancing government capacities on asylum decision-making principles and procedures—a pledge also made by the Albanian government at the Global Refugee Forum. By the end of 2020, groundwork for this initiative was in place, and activities will be rolled out early next year, in parallel with ongoing support to the full resumption of asylum procedures in the current Covid-19 context.

## OUTCOME 2 Social Cohesion

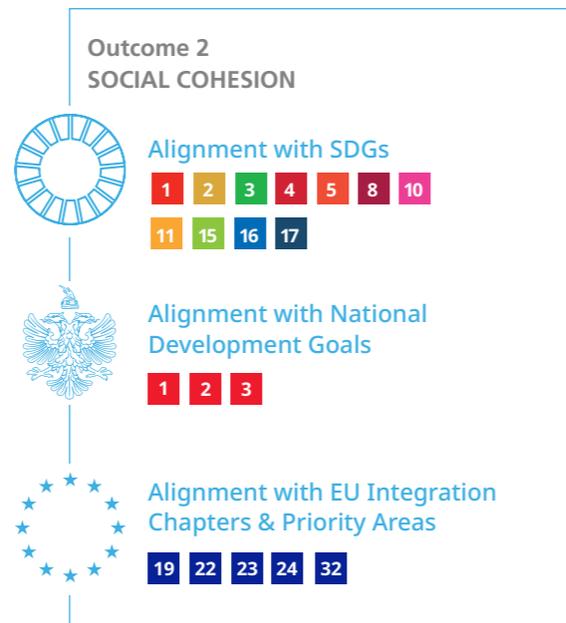
All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights, while more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels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

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

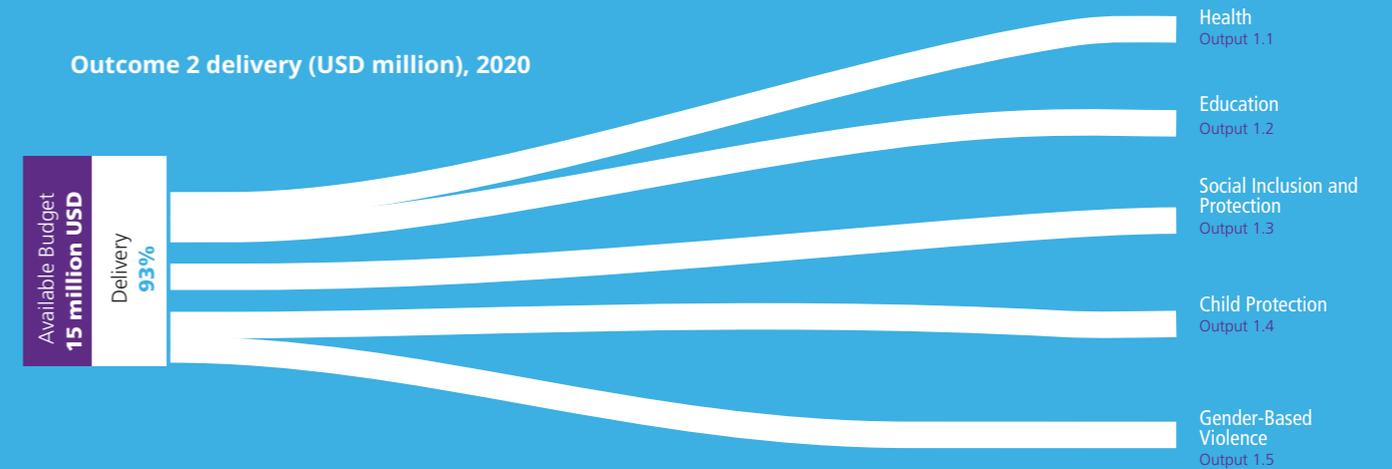
This outcome supports the Government of Albania in achieving three priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Consolidate good governance, democracy, and the rule of law, and 3) Investing in people and social cohesion. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8,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

The total available budget for implementation of Outcome 2 in 2020 was USD 15 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Albania, Austria, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as the EU, Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, Peacebuilding Fund, other miscellaneous donors, and UN regional and global funds (Joint SDG Fund, UNICEF Global Thematic Funds). The outcome delivery was 93 percent.

Assessment using indicators of progress made towards achievement of targets shows that of 29 targets, 27 (93%) are on track, one (3%) is partially on track, and one (3%) has not progressed. For further details on progress made against the indicators please check Annex A of the present report.



Outcome 2 delivery (USD million), 2020



### INDICATOR

INDICATOR	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2020
↓ Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 deliveries)	32	7
↑ Schoolchildren's learning outcomes (as measured by PISA)	Reading 394 Math 394 Science 397	Math 437 Reading 405 Science 417
↑ No. instruments facilitating implementation of legal framework for Child Protection is in place	0	17
↑ % of Child Protection Units that perform case management of children at risk and need for protection	26%	85%
↑ Number of health-care institutions that have conducted self-assessment on compliance with approved Quality of Care Standards	5 hospitals	12 hospitals and hospital services 6 PHC Centers 4 non-public clinics
↑ Presence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in all schools at all levels, private and public including 10-18 years of age	20%	50%
↑ No. schools and children reached with Trafficking in human beings' prevention and education interventions	1200	2100
↑ Number of sector-specific policies with explicit social inclusion targets	4	45
↑ No. Roma and Egyptian women and men with improved access to basic social protection services.	357	4500
↑ Number of sector-specific policies with explicit social inclusion targets	4	45
↑ Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems established countrywide	0	6
↓ % Women who have experienced physical violence during their lives	23.7%	18%
↑ No. municipalities with functional CRMs	27	59
↑ No. cases of gender-based violence addressed through CRMs	312	994

## OUTPUT 2.1 - HEALTH

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



### Contributing UN Agencies

UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, IAEA, FAO



### Contributing Partners

Governments of Albania, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, United States, United Kingdom, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UN regional/global funds (Joint SDG Fund, Global Thematic), other miscellaneous donors



### Financial Amount (USD)

6, 158, 380



### Alignment with SDGs

**Goals:** 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17

**Targets:** 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c, 3.d, 8.2, 11.6, 16.5, 17.18

## Implementation Progress

UN agencies' efforts in 2020 were focused on responses to the emergencies, the earthquake and the Covid-19 pandemic, while continuing interventions in improving people-centred primary health care, integrating health and social care at the community level, and raising investment in the infrastructure of health facilities. To address immediate needs, and in close collaboration and partnership with MoHSP and other partners, WHO played a substantial role in assisting Albania with Covid-19 case management and infection prevention. Many important achievements reached in 2020 and supported by WHO include the following:

- advancements made in the policy framework with evaluation of the Albanian National Health Strategy 2016–2020, which will feed into the development of the new Albanian National Health Strategy 2021–2030
- support for the national Covid response through assisting MoHSP with the development of three strategies to respond to the pandemic, the Plan for the Vaccination and Deployment of Covid-19 vaccine, and analysis of the Health System response to Covid-19 in Albania (HSRM)<sup>30</sup>
- undertaking of rapid assessments on 'Availability and access to essential health services during Covid-19', 'Impact of Covid-19 to the NCD

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/mainpage.aspx>



SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL COVID RESPONSE

- Prevention and Early Detection Programmes in PHC' and 'Impact of Covid-19 to the immunisation programme in the country'
- setting up of a Public Health Emergency Operation Centre at MoHSP
- upgrading of the national Covid-19 Infectious Disease Information System
- development of a communication package on AMR in the context of Covid-19
- undertaking of a pilot study and training of the 'First Few X (FFX) Pandemic Influenza A (HxNy) Cases and Contact Investigation Protocol'
- preparation of daily situation reports
- updating of Albania's data to the Covid-19 Partners Platform (<https://covid-19-response.org>)
- activation of the Covid-19 green phone line
- scaling up of the Covid-19 communication campaign in the country
- conducting of the Solidarity Trial for Covid-19

- treatment, with the participation of 65 persons
- scaling up of contact tracing capacities in Albania by providing MoHSP with twelve vehicles (with rent and fuel) for field surveillance teams
- assessment of IPC gaps and training needs of University Hospital Mother Tereza, PHC centres in Tirane and Regional Hospital Durrës
- strengthening of the capacities of health staff and volunteers on IPC, laboratory assessment, mental health, diabetes, benefiting 17,000 frontline responders to safely take on the pandemic
- assessment of preparedness of Point of Entry, including with regard to migrant health
- support for the Albanian Diabetes Association for the care of people with diabetes in Covid times (continuity of essential health services), with the conducting of a survey on access to health services in a sample of 800 people with diabetes.

In addition, aiming to strengthen the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practices in the health facilities, UNICEF in partnership with the University of Medicine, supported MoHSP in drafting the IPC protocols for neonatal and paediatric services and providing the tools to implement the standards and protect health-care professionals from Covid-19. Thus, 1,136 health-care workers in 38 health facilities were reached with PPE supplies, reaching out to a population of more than 300,000. Also, UNICEF in partnership with the National Operator of Health Services, supplied disinfectant to all 407 PHC centres and 8,288 health personnel working in PHC service delivery.

To strengthen the capacities for management of Covid-19, WHO supported MoHSP with more than 306,000 laboratory supplies and diagnostics materials<sup>31</sup> and 114,000 pieces of PPE.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, UNICEF delivered 40 patient monitors, ten defibrillators and ten units of oxygen delivery units to the ministry.

All UN agencies continued comprehensive public awareness and information campaigns specifically tailored for target groups and aiming to inform, engage and educate the public on preventive measures against infection from Covid-19, as well as messages in support of the measures to reduce the spread of the virus. To name a few, UNICEF, with financial support from USAID, conducted a communication strategy, #SuperHeroesWearMask #WeHugwithHeart, targeting children (including with disability), families and teachers to stop



FIGHTING BREAST CANCER THROUGH INCREASED AWARENESS

Covid-19, and reached more than 500,000 people through traditional and digital platforms. WHO advocated and promoted #SafeHands Challenge, the power of cleanliness to fight coronavirus, as regular handwashing is just one way to help prepare your workplace to prevent #COVID19. More than 500,000 people were reached with crucial health information through media interviews and talk-show appearances, as well as UN agency websites and social media channels, with more than 500 Covid-19 documents published, including 125 guidance documents and ten research protocols.

UNICEF supported thirteen municipalities,<sup>33</sup> some 101,800 children and 50,000 adults from vulnerable families with personal and family hygiene supplies to ensure key hygiene practices were implemented at the

31 Laboratory supplies and diagnostics included 35,868 RT-PCR Tests (or > 32,000 RT-PCR tests), more than 80,000 reagents, 7,508 swab samples, 1,000 pulse oximeters, 182,000 antigen tests (Rapid diagnostic test; RTD) for Covid Lab 1 at the Institute of Public Health, Covid Lab 2 at Tirana University Hospital Centre Mother Theresa, and Covid Lab 3 at Shefqet Ndroqi University Hospital.

32 PPE: 2,000 gloves, 55,200 respirator masks, 46,200 medical masks, 1,620 AMR-branded textile masks, 4,000 face shields, 2,600 goggles, 2,200 gowns.

33 Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Kukes, Lezhe, Maliq, Pogradec, Shkoder, Tirana, Vau i Dejes, Vlone.

family and community levels in the context of Covid-19, while pre-school institutions in eleven regions were provided with cleaning and disinfection supplies, and 400 creches and kindergartens benefited from 2,000 hygiene kits for some 18,200 children.

UNFPA supported the strengthening of the national preparedness and response mechanism in provision of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services during emergencies and humanitarian crises with focus on Covid-19, with a Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) and 20 online training sessions were organised, reaching out to health-care providers from all regions of the country on provision of services in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, procedures for the provision of SRH services during the pandemic were developed, endorsed by MoHSP and disseminated to all local health units in the country. Also, a package of information materials was developed, aiming to ensure continuation and provision of health-care services (including medicines) to the elderly (particularly with chronic conditions), and procurement of PPE was undertaken for the country's maternity hospitals.

The HIV & TB response framework advanced, supported by WHO, through finalisation of an HIV National Strategic Document, TB National Strategic Document, and Rapid assessment of the continuity of HIV and TB essential services. Meanwhile, with WHO support, MoHSP prepared a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Plan for intervention during the emergency and a rapid assessment of the impact of Covid-19 upon access to and utilisation of mental health services. It also strengthened capacities of 250 professionals on mental health in emergencies and other relevant issues in collaboration with UNICEF.

Some 30,000 pregnant mothers and new-born were ensured protection from the consequences of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) through the revision and approval of Law no. 12/2020 on Universal Salt

Iodisation (USI), with UNICEF technical support, marking an important step towards the elimination of IDD in Albania. Computers and iodine testing kits were provided to all twelve regional public health laboratories monitoring iodine in salt at all levels (imported, produced in country and marketed).<sup>34</sup>

In addition, the nutrition status for around 500,000 school-age children will improve, credited to UNICEF's engagement with MoHSP, MoESY, IPG, Albanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education (ASCAP) and MoARD to review food standards in schools, marketing of unhealthy food to children and drafting of standards that make healthy food available, while restricting unhealthy food, as well as development of a marketing regulation framework. To inform better planning, a situation analysis was prepared in 2020 based on existing data, including a secondary analysis of nutrition-related behaviours, with data disaggregated by gender.<sup>35</sup>

Incidentally, IPH and all the regional health departments consolidated the web-based data collection system for child (younger than 5 years) nutrition monitoring and adjusted reporting in the context of Covid-19, with UNICEF support. Some 80 health professionals in thirteen districts were supervised and coached in data collection, analysis and reporting for child nutrition monitoring, and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling was undertaken in the context of Covid-19, while 5,265 children under five years were monitored and data registered in the child nutrition monitoring web-based system, and 4,842 mothers were provided advice on IYCF through the PHC service providers.<sup>36</sup>

34 <https://www.parlament.al/Files/Akte/20200214150300ligj%20nr.%2012,%20dt.%2012.2.2020.pdf>

35 [https://twitter.com/albania\\_unicef/status/1302847940948561920](https://twitter.com/albania_unicef/status/1302847940948561920)

36 [https://www.facebook.com/unicefalbania/posts/2735902623330003?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/unicefalbania/posts/2735902623330003?__tn__=-R)

Equally importantly, the area of food and nutrition support within Albania will also benefit from mapping of the coordination mechanisms for school health, including governance, inter-sectoral alliances and networks for a health-in-all-policies approach, prepared by WHO and which will feed into a five-year project on improving health literacy of school children in the country, funded by the government of Switzerland, to start implementation in 2021.

In addition, aiming to improve the quality of care for mothers and the new-born, UNFPA supported the development of a study to identify the level of proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal care for mothers and babies, serving to provide evidence to policy makers with regard to availability and quality of care at each health-care facility, regarding maternal and new-born care. Furthermore, aiming at improving the quality of care for SRH services, UNFPA supported the revision and endorsement of national family planning protocols, and updated the accreditation and implementation of virtual learning platform on family planning. Therefore, 41 health-care providers from various regions of the country were enrolled in this online platform in 2020, and an assessment was carried out for 'Evaluation of the LMIS programme and key indicators of the National Contraceptive Security Action Plan 2017–2021.' Equally importantly, a strengthened national Reproductive and Health Committee supported evaluation of the Strategic Document on SRHR 2017–2021 and an outline of a structure for preparation of the new Law on Reproductive Health.

The national response to prevention and control programmes on breast and cervical cancer was further strengthened in 2020. WHO supported MoHSP in conducting the Global Youth Tobacco

Survey and preparing a Study on Compliance to Tobacco Law in Albania. UNFPA distributed HPV self-sampling kits, with instructions on procedures and logistics, in seven regions of the country. The agency also developed informative materials for HPV testing for use by PHC providers and women, assessed the diagnostic capacity in Albania (mapping of colposcopy services), and increased awareness of women who result HPV positive after testing, through design of a leaflet with key messages and the conducting of awareness-raising events (e.g. the Breast Cancer Walk).

### Implementation Challenges

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

The Covid-19 lockdown had repercussions in the immunisation, home visit and child health services. Planned trainings and consultations had to be switched to on-line platforms and a remote coaching system was rolled-out.

## OUTPUT 2.2 - EDUCATION

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



### Implementation Progress

The UN in Albania remained engaged during 2020 to advancing the national roadmap towards SDG 4, calling for access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, through flexible and adaptable programming to the Covid-19 pandemic. By the end of the year, the UN had vigorously positioned itself as the leading partner in the education sector, supporting national efforts around post-earthquake and the Covid response, as well as reimagining a future for education leapfrogging learning outcomes, through the development of a visionary education sector strategy. It ensured access to a world-class digital learning solution ([akademi.al](http://akademi.al)) and launched programmes for 21st-century skills (UPSHIFT, Ponder) for children and young people, building the critical foundation skills of Albania's children to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Ensuring standards for safe return to school and tailored support for vulnerable children were at the focus of UN agency efforts in 2020, including provision of Covid-19 safety packages to students and schools all across the country.

The education policy framework and evidence-based generation advanced with the development of a first-class diagnosis of the education system, prepared by MoHSP with support from UNICEF and OECD, as well as provision of the start of preparations for the new national Education Strategy 2021–2026, which will draw on the findings from the diagnosis assessment. Moreover, ASCAP drafted guidelines for curricula and

standards of pre-school principles and strengthened capacities of 700 pre-school teachers in inclusive child-centred methodologies through a training programme developed with UNICEF assistance. In addition, the operationalisation of the recently approved Youth Law was enabled, with UNICEF support, through development and consultation of the first four by-laws on: 1) Strengthening the Youth Service Agency; 2) Defining procedures and criteria for selection of grantees and youth organisations to benefit from state budget; 3) Establishment of a youth database; and 4) Defining criteria for the Representative National Youth Organisation. Also, with the National Action Plan on Youth 2015–2020 undergoing evaluation, work has initiated to set the basis for the development of a new National Strategy and Action Plan on Youth 2021–2025 to be supported by UNICEF.

Responding to school closures and hybrid learning modalities due to the Covid-19 pandemic, UNICEF provided direct support, with contributions from the governments of the Netherlands and the UK, to (i) scale up the digital interactive learning platform ([akademi.al](https://akademi.al)), resulting in 190,000 virtual classes taking place with 350,000 registered users to undertake their teaching and learning; (ii) curate a digital learning solution, through design of 5,000 videos, that meets flexible needs of children, including those with disabilities, by ensuring accessibility standards and providing age-appropriate digital content for building the broadest range of skills. UNICEF efforts in remediating learning gaps for disadvantaged students, with contribution from the government of Switzerland, resulted in (i) 500 out-of-school pupils affected by the earthquake benefiting from provision of learning devices; (ii) 300 pupils at risk of dropping out of school receiving social and emotional support, while 700 teachers and 61 professional networks benefited from professional

development through operationalisation of the Early Warning System methodology for Drop Out Prevention, which by the end of 2020 had become part of ASCAP's inspection guidelines.

Contributing to 21st-century skill building, under the framework of the national project 'Access to Justice, A2J' supported financially by the government of Sweden, ILO, in cooperation with ASCAP, designed the curriculum and the respective teaching manual on Negotiation and Peaceful Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills in High School Students: the Future Workers and Employers. In addition, through UNFPA support, ASCAPE expanded the comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programme in 18 local education offices and strengthened capacities of 700 relevant teachers and 72 school directors, while ToT CSE capacities were strengthened in four Regional Directories of Pre-University Education in Durres, Fier, Korce and Lezhe. Moreover, under the framework of UNESCO's project 'Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey Phase II', financed by the EU, ASCAPE integrated the Media Literacy curricula into the Albanian education system, providing the opportunity for at least 20 schools to pilot the new curricula, around 175 teachers to acquire skills for its delivery, and disseminating 1,500 copies of the Handbook for journalism education and training: 'Journalism, Fake News and Disinformation'.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, 21st-century skill-building was extensively promoted by the government through UNICEF's innovative programmes, and with financial support from the governments of the UK and the Netherlands, such as UPSHIFT, Ponder and a Programme on Public Speaking in five municipalities, benefiting more than 1,000 young people, while advocacy efforts are ongoing to introduce these methodologies as part of the education curricula.

<sup>37</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews>



#MYSCHOOL IS A SAFE PLACE

The C4D strategy '#myschool is a safe place' based on Positive Behaviour Interventions Support (PBIS) has played a crucial role in changing the attitudes of schools and communities towards violence in school and led to better and more positive classroom management techniques, creative, passionate teaching and engaged, empowered learning. Through various capacity building exercises and awareness-raising events, the C4D implementation reached 500 teachers, 11,000 students and 21,000 parents, and revealed that PBIS methods are appropriate strategies for better management of students and marked a decrease in inappropriate behaviours in school settings. As a result, a methodology to combat violent extremism at school was developed and approved by MoESY, with support

of UNICEF and various national stakeholders, and implemented in 52 schools, benefiting with relevant capacity development 201 teachers, while the awareness campaign reached 15,000 children, 25,000 parents and 15,000 teachers with messages on prevention and addressing violent extremism.

### Implementation Challenges

Traditional methods of education were shaken, and the educational programming could not take place using the same delivery methods during Covid-19 school closures. In response, UNICEF developed a new digital interactive platform for learning online ([akademi.al](https://akademi.al)) offering 5,000 video lessons to students from all backgrounds and ages.

## OUTPUT 2.3 - SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

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



### Implementation Progress

Under the Leave no One Behind (LNB) project, financially supported by SDC, and the Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery (IMSPSD) project, financially supported by the UN SDG Fund, by the end of 2020, at the community and local level, vulnerable groups were empowered over their rights and entitlements to social services. They participated meaningfully in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms, while municipal institutional capacities were strengthened in implementing social inclusion policies at the local level and in providing inclusive services. Meanwhile, CSOs were enabled for holding municipal authorities accountable for social care services delivery.

A total of 25 municipalities<sup>38</sup> developed and costed participatory social care plans in 2020, with support from UNDP and UNICEF, of which 18 plans were endorsed within the year, bringing to 44 (72%) the number of municipalities with social plans in the country, with 37 (61%) approved. The social care plans of six municipalities<sup>39</sup> were engendered with UN Women support and now reflect the social needs of vulnerable women and girls.<sup>40</sup> In addition, 20

38 LNB-UNDP: Belsh, Divjaka, Has, Kelcyre, Konispol, Kucove, Libohove, Mirdite, Patos, Tropoje; LNB-UNICEF: Gramsh, Himara, Klos, Kolonje, Pustec, Selenica, Tepelena, Vau i Dejes, Vora; IMSPSD-UNDP: Fushe-Arrez, Polican, Rrogozhine and Skrapar; IMSPSD-UNICEF: Devoll, Puke.

39 Devoll, Kamez, Pogradec, Puke, Rrogozhine, Tirane.

40 The municipalities were also provided with critical overview and policy recommendations on how to ensure reflection of gender specific priorities in the upcoming social care plans, contributing to progress towards SDG targets 5.c and 5.4.

municipalities<sup>41</sup> developed participatory budget briefs linked with the MTBP 2021–2023.<sup>42</sup> These plans reflect feedback from more than 7,000 Roma and Egyptian (R&E), People with Disability (PWD) and other women and youths, who engaged in forums and debates with respective local authorities on issues of their concern. Ten municipalities<sup>43</sup> applied GRB within their MTBP 2021–2023, with UN Women technical assistance and mentoring. Fifteen municipalities<sup>44</sup> developed youth local plans and youth budgeting, and four municipalities completed monitoring youth engagement reports, with the support of UNFPA.

Ten community centres were established and operationalised, with support of UNDP, in ten municipalities.<sup>45</sup> During Covid-19, UNDP operationalised an online network of professionals of community centres in eight municipalities<sup>46</sup> to enable provision of online specialised services for PWD, benefiting 117 children with disabilities and their parents. A day centre for older persons was established in Vlora Municipality, with UNFPA support, providing integrated health and social care, as well as civic engagement, young people and volunteers, to improve inter-generational solidarity. Also, UNFPA supported establishment of three voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centres in prison settings: Jordan Misja Pre-Detention Unit (300 prisoners), Fier (800 prisoners) and Rec

41 LNB-UNDP: Has, Kelcyre, Konispol, Libohove, Mirdite; LNB-UNICEF: Gramsh, Himara, Klos, Kolonje, Pustec, Selenica, Tepelena, Vau i Dejes, Vora; IMSPSD-UNDP: Fushe-Arrez, Polican, Rrogozhine, Skrapar; IMSPSD-UNICEF: Devoll, Puke.

42 The budget briefs provide an analysis on funding of social care services at the central and local level and progress in financing the reform on social care services.

43 Devoll, Durrës, Elbasan, Kamez, Korce, Lezhe, Pogradec, Puke, Rrogozhine, Tirane.

44 Belsh, Diber, Durrës, Fier, Korce, Kruje, Lezhe, Maliq, Permet, Pogradec, Roskovec, Shijak, Shkoder, Tirane, Ura Vajgurore.

45 Bulqize, Diber, Korce, Lushnje, Maliq, Permet, Pogradec, Sarande, Shijak, Ura Vajgurore.

46 Bulqize, Diber, Lushnje, Permet, Pogradec, Sarande, Shijak, Ura Vajgurore.

Prison (Shkoder; 600 prisoners). With the support of UNFPA, community model<sup>47</sup> implementation was consolidated in ten municipalities,<sup>48</sup> through strengthening capacities of 63 health-care providers, six community representatives, and 51 health mediators from the R&E community, reaching 18,224 community members (28%, PWD; 33%, R&E). By the end of 2020, the community model was established and active in 18 municipalities,<sup>49</sup> with Gjirokaster and Permet municipalities being newly added in 2020. A total of 15 best practices<sup>50</sup> in social care services provision for vulnerable groups was completed, with UNDP support, and is available for further replication at the local level. Also, UNICEF supported capacity development on the usage of MIS for the social care services for 300 social welfare professionals from 42 municipalities.

The National Social Fund support to LGUs, aimed towards development and extension of social care services at the local level, was reinforced with the award of the LNB-UNDP 'Social Fund Resourcing Grant',<sup>51</sup> benefiting 17 LGUs<sup>52</sup> and contributing directly to marking progress towards achieving

47 Stands for the health education teams comprised health-care providers (at PHC level) and community volunteers (including from marginalised and vulnerable community groups). Health education teams conducted community-based activities on maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health priorities, based on action plans developed by the teams.

48 Berat, Elbasan, Gjirokaster, Korce, Kucove, Malesi e Madhe, Permet, Pogradec, Puke, Shkoder.

49 The community model is established in 18 municipalities: Berat, Devoll, Erseke, Gjirokaster, Gramsh, Kelcyre, Korce, Kucove, Lezhe, Librazhd, Malesi e Madhe, Permet, Pogradec, Puke, Shkoder, Skrapar, Ura Vajgurore, Vau i Dejes.

50 Catalogue of Best Practices for the Provision of Social Care Services: <https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/catalogue-of-best-practices-for-the-provision-of-social-care-ser.html>

51 In close coordination with MoHSP, and in line with the grant scheme's regulations for new social care services at local level, LNB allocated funds to resource Social Fund and support social care services at the local level.

52 Proposals for innovative community-based social services at the local level in line with the LNB grant scheme's regulations are being implemented in Belsh, Diber, Durrës, Kamez, Klos, Korce, Lushnje, Malesi e Madhe, Mat, Patos, Permet, Pogradec, Prrenjas, Puke, Roskovec, Sarande, Shkoder. Letters of agreement with municipalities are signed and funds were disbursed in October 2020.

SDG target 1.4. Seven municipalities<sup>53</sup> strengthened institutional capacities to develop a social care plan and access the National Social Fund, through conducting four trainings per municipality, benefiting more than 60 municipal staff, supported by UNDP and UNICEF.

Some 27 representatives (all women) of ten CSOs strengthened their capacities, with UN Women support, in integrated social care services sector planning and expenditure monitoring, resulting in the preparation of Gender Budget Watchdog reports in six municipalities.<sup>54</sup> Also, participatory budgeting practices were conducted in eleven municipalities,<sup>55</sup> reaching more than 950 women. In addition, the Informal CSO Participatory Budgeting Network PRISMA was established to promote the active participation of women and communities in the participatory budgeting process and influence the local priorities and effective use of local budgets for advancing gender equality, contributing to making progress towards SDG 5.c and 5.4. Moreover, thirteen organisations of PWD strengthened their own organisational and advocacy capacities through implementation of small projects supported by the LNB-UNDP grant scheme.

As a result of the above joint efforts, more than 24,000 vulnerable individuals, including R&E, PWD, women, children, youth, and others, received quality social care services, contributing to achievement of SDG target 1.3, through implementation of innovative models of integrated social services in

three municipalities,<sup>56</sup> quality community-based services in ten municipalities,<sup>57</sup> income generation measures, integrated health and social protection services in six municipalities,<sup>58</sup> community model in ten municipalities, and emergency nutritional and hygienic packages during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

Incidentally, advancements at the policy level during 2020, supported by LNB and IMSPSD and contributing to achievement of SDG targets 10.2 (10.2.1), 10.3 (10.3.1) and 11.1 (indicator 11.1.1), include: completion of the legal framework on Social Housing (22 by-laws approved and 8 pending) and of the Law on Inclusion of and Accessibility for PWD (1 by-law approved and 3 pending); adoption of the Protocol on the Functioning of Non-Residential Centres for PWD, during and after the Covid-19 pandemic; monitoring implementation of the Social Inclusion Policy Document and the Social Housing Strategy; and development of Action Plans on PWD and Accessibility and on the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2021–2025, with 123 stakeholders (87 female; 36 male) participating in the first wave of consultations, all with the support of UNDP. Furthermore, on 24 December 2020, UNFPA supported approval of the National Action Plan on Ageing 2020–2024.

Meanwhile, in view of ensuring the sustainability of integrated social services at the municipal level, ILO, through the IMSPSD project, explored the fiscal space and potential to extend the social protection coverage and benefits for the vulnerable at the national and municipal levels. In addition two reports were prepared: i) Review of the Social Protection System in Albania, and ii) Assessment of

53 Devoll, Fushe-Arrez, Kamez, Polican, Puke, Rrogozhine, Skrapar.

54 Devoll, Kamez, Pogradec, Puke, Rrogozhine, Tirane.

55 Budgeting practices were facilitated by the UN Women partner organisation Community Development Centre 'Today for the Future' in cooperation with local grassroots organisations. These CSOs reflected concerns voiced by women and the most vulnerable groups participating in these consultative processes. Municipalities involved include: Devoll, Diber, Durres, Elbasan, Kamez, Lezhe, Lushnje, Pogradec, Puke, Rrogozhine, Tirane.

56 Fier, Fushe-Kruje, Lezhe.

57 Bulqize Lushnje, Pogradec, Sarande and Shijak, and newly established centres in Diber, Korçe, Maliq, Permet, Ura Vajgurore.

58 Devoll, Kamez, Pogradec, Puke, Rrogozhine, Tirane.

Fiscal Space for Albania, which will inform the key national stakeholders in the country on the current and future challenges in social protection and social services. The recommendations from the reports will contribute to the national dialogue for shaping future policy to enhance the effectiveness of the social protection and social services that leave no one behind.

Equally importantly, in view of ensuring the development of a regulatory framework to enable the implementation of integrated health and social service models in pilot municipalities in Albania, WHO conducted the field work for a 'Rapid assessment of the degree of the coordination of health and social services at the community level (Primary Health Care, Public Health, Social Care Services), identification of gaps and opportunities for an integrated approach in six municipalities,<sup>59</sup> with participation of 21 PHC centres, including seven from Tirana Municipality and fourteen from the other five municipalities.

Another outstanding achievement, from IMSPSD implementation in 2020, is the measurement, for the first time in Albania, of SDG indicator 1.3.1: *Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable*. The preliminary findings indicated that the proportion of persons effectively covered by a social protection system, including social protection floors is, 61.7 percent<sup>60</sup> and that the proportion of the population protected in at least one social protection area is 70 percent.

59 Ibid.

60 Draft report on monitoring of SDG 1.3.1.

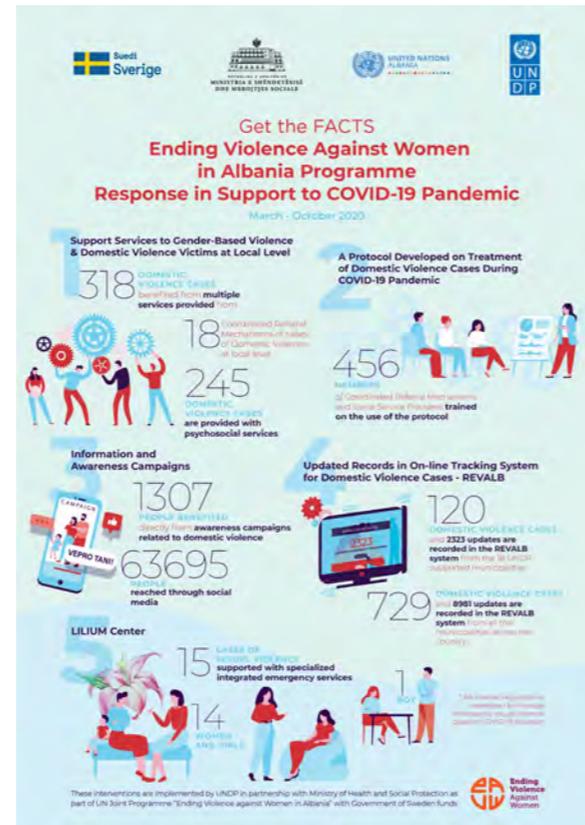


CASH SUPPORT PROGRAM, FIRST OF ITS KIND TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE OF FAMILIES IN NEED

To ensure implementation of the policy framework for social care, the efforts of UN agencies focused on developing tools, improving evidence and strengthening central institutional capacities, through LNB support. In this regard, through partnership with the Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-University Education, UNDP enhanced the capacities of 52 heads of the professional network of assistant teachers to support children with special needs. UN Women also provided support to INSTAT to conduct a Social Vulnerability Mapping study and to measure poverty and



FAST FACTS UNDP JP EVAWIA DV SUPPORT SERVICES



FAST FACTS UNDP JP EVAWIA RESPONSE IN SUPPORT TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

social exclusion at the local level from a gender perspective, enabling policymakers at the local level to make informed decisions, contributing to SDG target 5.c. UNICEF supported the Faculty of Social Sciences to revise the curricula of the Bachelor degree in Social Work,<sup>61</sup> to establish an online platform for Social Protection and Social Services ([sociale.al](http://sociale.al)), providing social workers with information on the framework of social protection and social services, and to capacitate 25 social work teachers and experienced practising social workers on a core set of interpersonal communication and

61 The social work Bachelor curricula will also include specific dedicated modules of Interpersonal Communication and Community Engagement to Influence and Support Individual and Social Change.

community engagement competences that would influence and support individual and social change. UNFPA started to develop a new professional position—Social Operator—a structure planned to be established by Tirana Municipality in 2021 according to its local social plans, for 30 students, social workers and psychologists to build capacities for the role. In addition, the ILO reports on fiscal space and the social protection system, along with two manuals published in Albanian—Handbook of fiscal space analysis, and Social Security for All—served as resource training materials to enhance the awareness and capacities of social protection and finance specialists from the six pilot municipalities of the IMSPSD project (see above) on

how to effectively: i) apply fiscal space analysis for improved financial monitoring and management and efficient and equitable allocation of resources at the municipal level, and ii) discuss common and specific challenges in the social protection and social services that face the municipalities through the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.

### Implementation Challenges

The pandemic in Albania has widened the present gaps and inequalities and highlighted pre-existing challenges of the social protection system. Cash transfers and humanitarian packages (food and hygiene supplies) were the main measures supporting poor and vulnerable households. Social care services, despite their low spending, did not receive any additional financing to cope with the pandemic and increase their outreach. Furthermore, whereas child benefits are not part of the social protection system in the country, targeted child poverty cash measures were not included in the response package. As highlighted in various rapid assessments carried out during the pandemic (by UN Women, Terre Des Home, Save the Children, World Vision, etc.), access to basic services and social services has been a challenge for the most vulnerable communities, while the existing social services have limited capacities and specialised services are absent in rural areas. UN agencies, under the LNB and IMSPSD projects, maintained persistent communication and coordination with beneficiary municipalities, ensuring that those most in need received adequate support.

Acknowledging the important role of LGUs in the overall response to the pandemic, gender-responsive planning and budgeting were made even more relevant as tools for ensuring that the needs of women, and especially the most vulnerable, were not marginalised in the response

measures. In this respect, the overall mentoring process for LGUs was adjusted to the new reality and considering and using all available resources and data that show how the pandemic has affected the lives and livelihoods of women and men and the groups most severely affected.

At the community level, the main challenge remains the quick-gain mentality of families, particularly among R&E, who condition their involvement in the programme on the provision of various forms of economic support. Consistent counselling, continuous family visits and monitoring, as well as involvement of families in project awareness activities and close cooperation with municipal social services staff, contributed in gaining the trust of the community and its commitment to the project, raising awareness of their limited skills to access the labour market and slowly changing their mentality for considering sustainable (self-) employment opportunities provided by the project in order to break the poverty cycle.

## OUTPUT 2.4 - CHILD PROTECTION

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



### Contributing UN Agencies

UNICEF, WHO, ILO



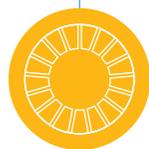
### Contributing Partners

Governments of Albania, United Kingdom, United States, Ending Violence against Children (EVAC) Fund, UN regional/global funds (Joint SDG Fund)



### Financial Amount (USD)

2, 470, 904



### Alignment with SDGs

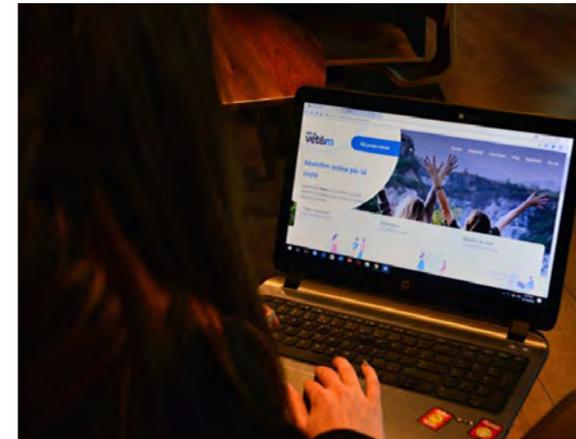
**Goals:** 1, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17

**Targets:** 1.3, 1.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 8.7, 10.2, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a, 17.6, 17.9, 17.17, 17.18

### Implementation Progress

In 2020, thanks to UNICEF support and empowered by contributions from the UK government, the national child protection system was able to rapidly address child violence and risks of abuse exacerbated by the November 2019 earthquake and emergencies caused by Covid-19. A total of 5,363 children (female, 2,792; children with disabilities, 353), benefited from 24/7 counselling and referrals online and on the phone as a result of an upgrade in the technological capacities of the pivotal National Child helpline ALO116 and Mental Health and PsychoSocial Support service [www.nukjvetem.al](http://www.nukjvetem.al). The entire workforce of 236 statutory child protection workers was supported through on-the-job and online coaching in partnership with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, while 90 child protection and social workers received in-service training delivered by the Albanian School of Public Administration. As a result of those interventions, a reduction in poor performing Child Protection Units was evidenced, from 22 to eight within one year, and an increase of 180 percent (from 10 to 28) in cases referred from the health sector, and 31 percent (from 75 to 98) from the education sector, contributing directly to achievement of SDG targets 16.1, 16.2, 16.9, 16.10, 16.a and 17.9.

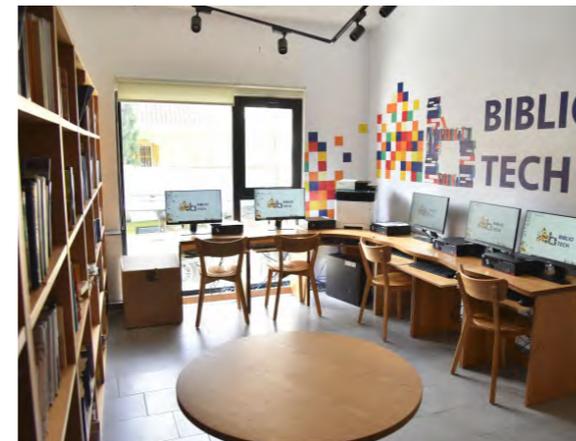
Remarkable milestones in the overall childcare reform process, in which UNICEF plays the lead



nukjvetem.al IS AN ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHO SOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS) SERVICE. UNICEF/ALBANIA/2019



FRIENDLY WIFI FILTERING SOLUTION IS PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND ADULT PORNOGRAPHY IN 5 PUBLIC PLACES OF TIRANA.



BIBLIOTECH INNOVATION HUBS ARE EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN 4 PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF TIRANA

technical role, were noted in 2020 with the endorsement of the National De-Institutionalisation Action Plan 2020–2022, drafting of three key documents substantial for replacing the outdated system of institutional childcare: (i) A model for Child and Family Support Hub, (ii) Guidelines model for child–family reunification, and (iii) A model alternative professional Foster Care Service. These results directly contribute to achievement of SDG targets 1.3, 1.4, 8.7 and 16.2.

Supported by contributions from the UK government and the End Violence Against Children Fund, UNICEF launched The Lost Cases assessment report, advocating strongly for changes to structural challenges in law enforcement groups that are directly hampering the effectiveness of the investigative work into online child sexual abuse. UNICEF also contributed to the BiblioTechs initiative—libraries turned into tech hubs—benefiting 5,578 children and adults in learning about digital safety in four public libraries in Tirana. In addition, it supported expansion of the Friendly Wi-Fi initiative with 53 additional access points in eight additional public spaces in Tirana, and blocking around 516,000 Internet requests to access blacklisted websites. UNICEF enabled 200 children and youth in a street situation to become engaged in UNICEF's hybrid new programme targeting children at risk of trafficking or abuse, digital literacy and online safety that bears a powerful equity focus and addresses the digital divide as it delivers opportunities to children who otherwise would have minimal exposure to digital learning, and Internet technologies. Moreover, the new national awareness campaign #TeBesoj (TrustMe), aiming to increase disclosure and timely reporting of sexual violence on the child, obtained



UNICEF ALBANIA'S EVENT AT SKANDERBEG SQUARE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED THE NATIONAL AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN #TEBESQJ. UNICEF/ALBANIA/2020

high visibility, engaging mayors, prefects, public figures and journalists, and reached more than 52 percent of the country's population. Furthermore, credited to the implementation efforts of the two-year programme Ending Human Trafficking in and from Albania, led by UNICEF and the anti-trafficking coalition of nearly twelve partners and supported by the UK Home Office, around 200 P/VoT were rescued and supported, valuable evidence was generated about knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of Albanian youth towards Human Trafficking, and engagement at the policy level was initiated with the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in supporting the development of a new National Action Plan on anti-Trafficking 2021–2023. These results directly contribute to achievement of SDG targets 1.3, 1.4, 8.7. and 16.2.

With contributions from the government of Albania to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, UNICEF<sup>62</sup> provided support to successfully repatriate four children and their mother from the Al Hawl Syria refugee camp, marking the first step along the complex road of further repatriations, with at least 50 other children of Albanian origin caught up in Syria and Iraq. This result directly contributes to SDG target 16.2.

### Implementation Challenges

Prominent challenges faced under this output included, among others, the movement restrictions and closure of many community services, shortage of PPE for frontline protection workers, house lockdown anxiety and mental health issues, growth of violence against children, and heightened exposure to online risks. Addressing these challenges called for thinking outside the box, with the introduction of mobile and rapid response protection teams to reach the most vulnerable groups stuck at home; extension of accommodation places to shelters for survivors of violence; provision of equipment and training to child helplines and online counselling services as they became central given the rapid increase in the need for such services. Maintaining programmatic consistency and rigorous technical investment, coupled with professional inter-personal relationships, were crucial to successfully maintaining partnerships and advocacy for advancements in the De-Institutionalisation process, even though Covid-19-related priorities were, by far, more pressing for the government.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF is the only international agency engaged in the process of long-term rehabilitative work and psychosocial support for children.

## OUTPUT 2.5 - GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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



### Implementation Progress

The UN Joint Programme on Ending Violence Against Women in Albania (EVAWIA), funded by the government of Sweden and implemented by UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA, supported MoHSP and other responsible state institutions in achieving the following tangible results:

#### *Improved sub-legal DV framework, tailored to Covid-19 pandemic situation*

Two standardised protocols were developed for Coordinated Referral Mechanisms members 'On managing domestic violence cases in normal and Covid-19 situation.'<sup>63</sup> A protocol, 'On the operation of public and non-public residential centres, providing shelter services to victims of domestic violence and human trafficking during Covid-19 pandemic' was adopted and enforced by MoHSP.<sup>64</sup> Policy and procedures against harassment, sexual harassment and violence to protect women and men among the armed forces and MoD personnel were adopted by MoD.<sup>65</sup> Three SOPs were adopted based on Essential Guidelines of the Multi-sectoral Response for the treatment of GB-DV cases by health and social care professionals in a normal situation and during

<sup>63</sup> Prepared by MoHSP with UNDP support.

<sup>64</sup> Prepared by MoHSP with UN Women support.

<sup>65</sup> Prepared by MoD with UNDP support. Albanian State Police, with UN Women support, reviewed and updated the policy and procedures against harassment, sexual harassment and violence in police forces. ASP in collaboration with UN Women are also in the process of developing an e-Learning Module on a policy that will be mandatory for all police forces and supervised at all levels.



MOU SIGNING PA, DOPA AND UNDP ON DEVELOPING UNIFIED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SAFEGUARDING WORK ENVIRONMENT FROM VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT



CRM MAT MOU RE-SIGNING AND RECOMMITMENT OF CRM MEMBERS

civil emergencies.<sup>66</sup> A joint Ministerial Order of the Ministry of Justice and High Council of Justice, 'On the establishment of a unified DV database generated by courts', was adopted.<sup>67</sup> Tailored rules and procedures were developed and approved for management of emergency sexual violence cases in the Covid-19 situation in the LILIUM Centre.<sup>68</sup>

66 Prepared by MoHSP with UNFPA support.

67 Prepared with UNDP support.

68 Prepared by MoHSP and the Liliium Centre, with UNDP support.

### Enhanced and improved national response to, and public awareness of, gender-based and domestic violence and harassment in the workplace (national and local level)

Some 23 local institutional response mechanisms (CRMs) were established and strengthened,<sup>69</sup> with UNDP support, bringing to 59 the total number of municipalities with established CRMs (97% of country coverage) to prevent and effectively address DV at the local level through a multi-disciplinary and coordinated approach. The awareness raised on GB-DV is evidenced by a 219 percent increase in the number of cases recorded in the REVALB system (994 in 2020, from 312 in 2017). Integrated multi-sector emergency services to sexual violence victims were improved by strengthening the functioning and coordination of the LILIUM Centre, supported by MoHSP leadership and UNDP technical expertise. This work resulted in 25 cases of sexual violence receiving specialised integrated support services, twelve of which were during the Covid-19 lockdown. Implementation of key national policies and international treaties, including NSGE 2016–2020, CEDAW, and the Istanbul Convention, were evaluated and respective reports prepared with UN Women support. Two surveys 'On Gender Differences in Parenting and their impact on the Parent-Child Relationship' and 'On Child Abuse with primary focus on sexual violence in children of age 18 years and younger' were prepared with UNFPA support, aiming to aid awareness-raising campaigns, teacher curricula and trainings with evidence. Through ILO support, public events organised by social partners around Global Convention 190 on 'Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work' and Ministry of Finance and Economy analysis of the Albanian national legal framework with regard to the Convention, resulted in a unanimous decision of the National Labour Council to authorise MoFE to

69 Four established, and the remaining strengthened to become 100% operational.



LAUNCHING OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES AGAINST HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT TO PROTECT WOMEN AND MEN AMONG MOD PERSONNEL INCLUDING ARMED FORCES.

start the ratification procedure, which is currently under way. In addition, institutional partnerships were strengthened between the People's Advocate and Department of Public Administration, with UNDP support, to ensure commitment on joint work to prevent and protect employees from all forms of violence, harassment and sexual harassment in public administration institutions.

### Increased engagement of National Human Rights Institutions with human rights mechanisms and improved monitoring, accountability and transparency capacities related to gender equality and gender-based violence in Albania

With UN Women support, the People's Advocate (i) prepared and submitted an alternative report to the CEDAW Committee in relation to the fifth review of the country by the Committee;<sup>70</sup> and (ii) conducted a monitoring and analysis of budget planning to address GBV in the MTBPs 2018–2020 of the central government and five municipalities (which

70 Women's access to justice and free legal aid, the functioning of the gender equality machinery, violence against women, women economic and social rights, and situation of marginalised and disadvantaged women groups and rural women.



MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATORS

also informed the CEDAW alternative report).<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, with UNFPA support, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs prepared the Fifth State Report to CEDAW.

### Increased role of the Albanian Parliament and the Sub-Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality in promoting and supervising state authorities' measures in the area of GBV

With UN Women support, the Sub-committee (i) organised six hearing and participated in various national and international events related to gender equality and GBV, including on measures taken during the Covid-19 health crisis; (ii) requested and put into motion revision of DCM no. 334/2011 on the CRM functionality; and (iii) proposed recent amendments to the Law on Domestic Violence (125/2020),<sup>72</sup> including lessons learned from the pandemic experience and the need for better enforcement of protection orders, including during a health crisis.

71 <https://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/media/manager/website/reports/RAPORT%20MBI%20MONITORIMIN%20E%20BUXHETIMIT%20GJINOR%20PËR%20ADRESIMIN%20E%20DHUNËS%20ME%20BAZË%20GJINORE%20DHE%20DHUNËS%20NË%20FAMILJE%20NË%20SHQIPËRI%20NË%20VITIN%202018.pdf>

72 <https://www.parlament.al/Files/Akte/20201020140600ligj%20nr.%20125%20dt.%2015.10.2020.pdf>

### *Improved implementation capacities of local actors and law enforcement agencies*

With UNDP support, 400 judges, prosecutors, coordinators of domestic violence and service providers at the local level received certified trainings by ASPA and the School of Magistrates on the two newly approved protocols in managing DV cases by CRM members at the municipal level. With UN Women support, 37 public and non-public service providers were trained in provision of sheltering services during Covid-19 based on the approved protocol, 400 police officers and psychologists in the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, and 32 journalists on standards for reporting on GB-VAW and privacy protection of victims and legal obligations based on national and international standards. With UNFPA support, 118 professionals were informed on three GBV Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and 41 social and health care providers trained in the multi-sectoral response to GBV SOPs.

### *Increased institutional awareness on violence against women in politics*

For the first time in Albania, UN Women prepared a set of recommendations to address violence against women in elections, in the framework of discussions on electoral reform with the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Sub-Committee on Gender Equality and End of Violence against Women, gaining broad support by the MPs, and developed a comprehensive analysis of the Albanian legislation, to be further shared with key shareholders.

### *Challenged gender stereotypes and family power roles*

The 16 Days Campaign reached out to more than 2,700,000 persons through multiple online activities, led by UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA in partnership with CRMs, municipalities, CSOs,

local communities, the private sector and media, raising awareness on GBV. In addition, supported by UNICEF, thirteen public agencies in Berat and Gjirokaster signed a memorandum committing to work collaboratively to address cases of children in conflict with the law and child victims and witnesses of crime, including gender-motivated crimes. UNFPA's campaign the 'Scaling up of Be a Man Club' focused on engaging men and boys in eight districts in gender justice to end harmful practices, ensure transformative actions to redistribute power and create opportunities and access for women, men and gender non-conforming people through the dismantling of harmful and patriarchal structures. UNICEF provided technical advice to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth to integrate measures addressing child marriage into the new draft National Strategy on Education 2021–2026.

In the framework of the EU–UN Women regional EAW programme, 130 local service providers in four municipalities (Kamez, Kurbin, Lezhe, Vore) strengthened capacities to provide better services and protection for women survivors of GBV, resulting in issuance of the first special medical reports and immediate emergency protection orders by police and health-care providers in these municipalities. Coordinated Referral Mechanisms were also revitalised in two municipalities (Vore and the administrative unit of Fushe-Kruje) and started application of protocols for management of cases of domestic violence in family relationships at the local level, with more than 400 women benefiting from psychosocial counselling and free legal aid. The first Cooperation Agreement between a CSO (Women's Forum Elbasan) and a Regional Directory of Police (Elbasan) was signed, whereby a lawyer contracted by the CSO supports police officers in issuing preliminary emergency protection orders, playing not only a supporting role but also an educational and awareness raising one. As a result, more than

40 women and girls were supported in obtaining a Protection Order or Interpersonal Protection Order, provided with free legal aid and represented in court proceedings. Individual Safety Plans were prepared for more than 70 service providers with a specific focus on the individual needs of women from vulnerable groups (Roma women, women with disabilities, women from the LGBTIQI+ community), benefiting more than 400 women from these three groups with information on available support mechanisms and where to report violence, accompanied by the distribution of hygiene and protective equipment during the pandemic. Through UNICEF-led Anti-Trafficking coalition, supported by the UK government, multi-sectoral services, including support to cope with Covid-19, were delivered to 190 P/VoT, while 231 P/VoT received emergency protection services and 55 were enrolled in the economic reintegration programme. The Mobile Units established in four regions of the country (Diber, Kukes, Shkoder, Tirane) successfully identified and referred 33 P/VoT for multi-sectoral services support. In addition, the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, with UNICEF support, started the drafting process for the new National Action Plan on Trafficking 2021–2023.

### **Implementation Challenges**

The three-month lockdown from Covid-19 triggered an increase in domestic violence cases along with difficulties to access specialised support services, making more evident the need for an institutional multi-sectoral response to adequately respond to the needs of GB–DV victims. UN agencies designed a range of communication channels, innovative tools and online platforms for the state and non-state partners to facilitate and ensure delivery of support services to victims of GB–DV across the country, and remained flexible to adjusting activities and meetings in line with the restrictive measures and

agenda of the counterparts. As a result, no activities or initiatives were cancelled and work proceeded as planned.

Covid-19 also highlighted further the ubiquity of harmful social norms and patriarchal attitudes as a long-standing challenge in all programmatic efforts and initiatives carried out in order to eliminate violence against women and girls, evidenced also by the results of UN Women's Rapid Gender Assessment.<sup>73</sup> Through collaboration with a youth online magazine with a wide base of followers, a nationwide SMS campaign to encourage reporting of violence as a behaviour that needs to change, and other grassroots efforts, UN Women reached out to women from rural and remote areas to provide information, discuss and encourage reporting of the phenomenon as a social behaviour that might be easy to change.

The national parliamentary elections (April 25, 2021) might affect the availability and cooperation of main governmental counterparts at the central and local levels and might lead to government restructuring and potential staff turnover at the central level and in counterpart institutions. Such changes might lead to a slowdown in joint activities under this Output. Nevertheless, UN agencies will continue to keep a sharp focus at the local level ensuring that the planned interventions are delivered accordingly.

<sup>73</sup> <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods>

### OUTCOME 3

## Economic Growth, Labour and Agriculture

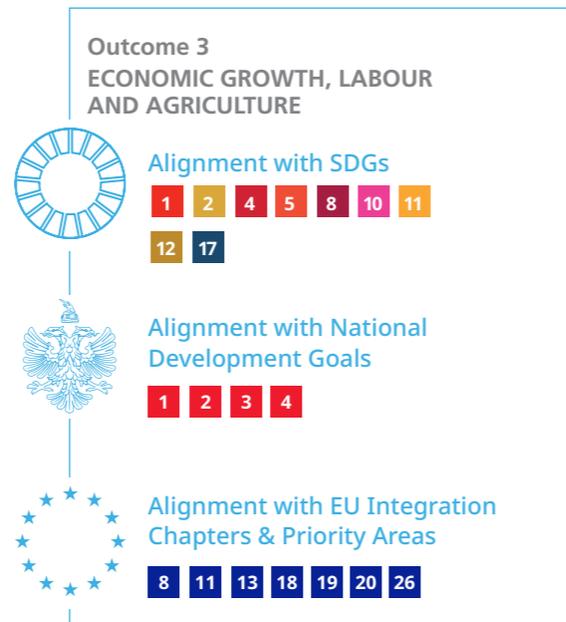
Economic growth priorities, policies, and programmes of the Government of Albania are inclusive, sustainable, and gender-responsive, with greater focus on competitiveness, decent jobs and rural development.

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

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

In 2020, the total available budget for implementation of Outcome 3 was USD 2.5 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Albania, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Hungary, as well as the EU. The outcome delivery was 60 percent.

Assessment of progress of achievement shows that of fourteen indicators, ten (71%) are on track and two (14%) are partially on track, while for two indicators (14%) the data to measure progress will be available by the end of 2021. For further details regarding progress made against the indicators please check Annex A of the present report.



Outcome 3 delivery (USD million), 2020



### INDICATOR

INDICATOR	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2020
↑ Ease of Doing Business (score)	60.5	67.7
↑ No. new businesses established	Total 16,731	17,508
↓ Youth unemployment rate (young men and women (15 – 29) who are: without work; available for work; and seeking work)	Total 34.2% Female 35.9% Male 33.3%	Total, 20.7% Female, 21.4% Male, 20.3%
↑ Growth of agriculture sector 2016 - 2020	2.25%	4.3%

## OUTPUT 3.1 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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



### Contributing UN Agencies

UNCTAD, UNECE



### Financial Amount (USD)

110,000



### Alignment with SDGs

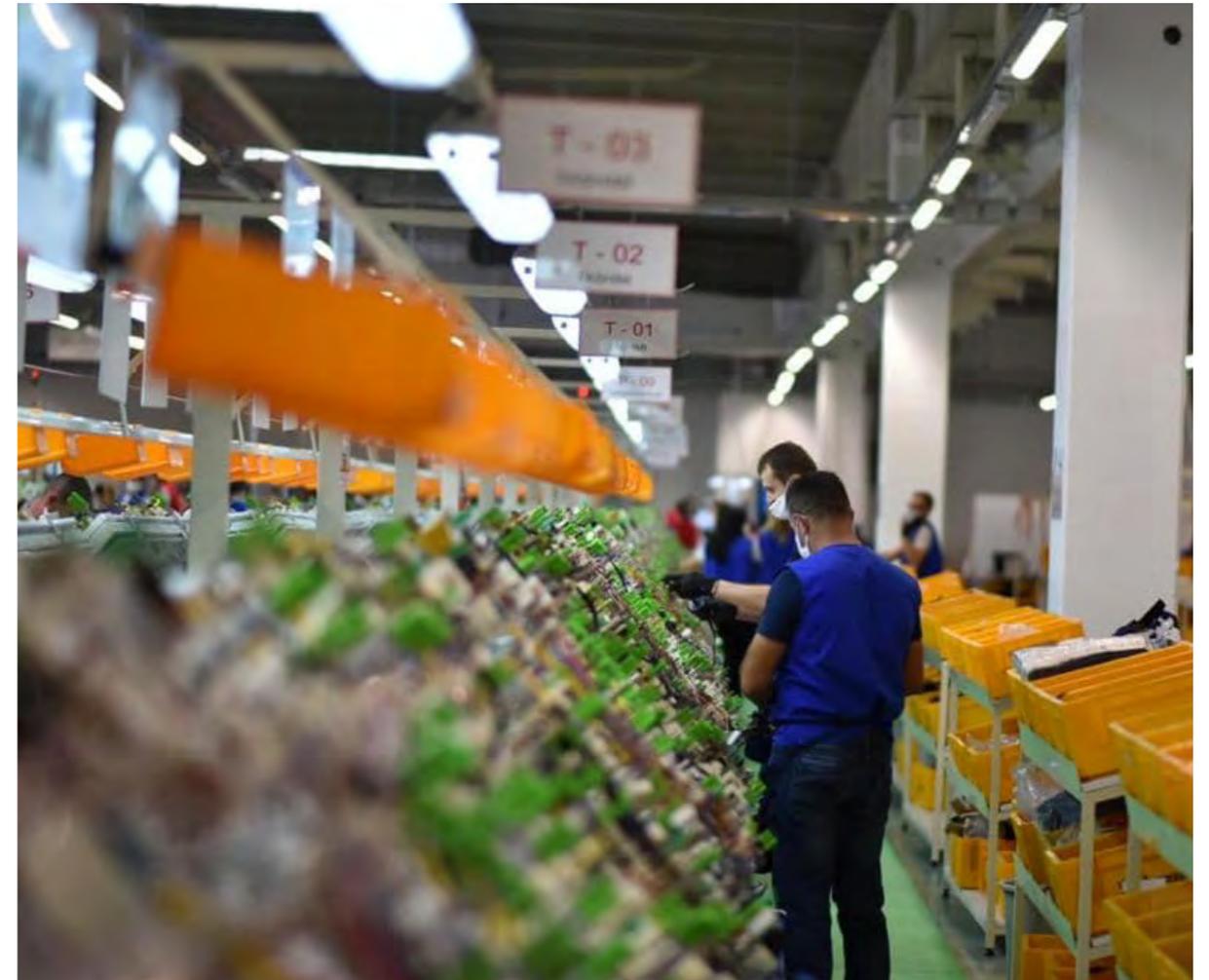
**Goals:** 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17

**Targets:** 1.1, 4.4, 8.3, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.b, 11.c, 12.a, 17.14

### Implementation Progress

The Covid-19 pandemic has opened the way for unfair, misleading and abusive business practices, hitting consumers hard and leaving the most vulnerable more disadvantaged. Such practices have required governments and consumer protection agencies to be vigilant and intervene to protect consumers effectively. The pandemic and measures taken to prevent its spread have also strongly affected all economies, both developed and developing. Competition authorities have had to show flexibility through exemptions and exceptions to ensure the survival of businesses.

In this context, UNCTAD's collaboration with Albania remained active in the area of competition law enforcement and policy with the view of supporting Albania's economic recovery in the aftermath of Covid. Such support is in line with the objectives of SDG 8, on the promotion of a sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and SDG 10, on the reduction of inequalities. In 2020, UNCTAD co-organised two international conferences, in June and December, in the framework of the Istanbul Competition Forum, and at which the Albanian competition authority presented the measures taken to address the consequences of the pandemic on Albania's economy.



PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTERING INNOVATION

In the area of trade facilitation and with reference to SDG 9, aimed at building resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation, UNECE-UNCTAD collaboratively fostered capacity building exercises on single window and data sharing in the Western Balkans. UNECE-UNCTAD collaboration is aiming at increasing the capacity of the Western Balkan countries, including Albania, to implement international (UN-CEFACT) standards and data

models for the implementation of a national Single Window. Progress was made in further aligning the work to the EU orientation of foreign trade and the European integration perspective of the Western Balkan countries, using the EU SW legislation and the EU Customs Data Model (EU CDM) for customs-related and UN-CEFACT's semantic standards and Reference Data Models (RDMs) in the World Bank, CEFTA (SEED+) and UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA).

## OUTPUT 3.2 - LABOUR

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



**Contributing UN Agencies**  
UNDP, ILO, IOM

**Contributing Partners**  
Governments of Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, the EU

**Financial Amount (USD)**  
1, 250, 067

**Alignment with SDGs**  
**Goals:** 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17  
**Targets:** 2.3, 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.b, 4.c, 5.5, 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9.3, 9.b, 9.c, 10.1, 10.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.b, 17.3, 17.8

### Implementation Progress

Under the UNDP's Skills Development for Employment (SD4E) Programme Consolidation Phase (2018–2022),<sup>74</sup> funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation, the following key results were obtained in 2020 from implementation of the priorities in the employment and skills development sector, contributing to SDG targets 4.4 and 8.5:

- Regular labour market signals were published and shared with the key institutions and donor agencies, through continuous monitoring of the changing context due to social distancing and the lockdown policies, benefitting MoFE, other public authorities and the donor community with up-to-date and concise analysis of key labour market indicators.<sup>75</sup> In addition, the work and functioning of the IPMG on Employment and Skills improved due to labour market analysis information, as well as other inputs on NESS implementation monitoring and VET optimisation, especially during the impact of the Covid-19 crisis.
- ALMPs were re-conceptualised to meet the individual needs of unemployed jobseekers, benefitting 2,822 beneficiaries (68%) out of a total

<sup>74</sup> Successor of SD4E (2014–2018).

<sup>75</sup> LFS updates: [https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis\\_prevention\\_and\\_recovery/brief-analysis-labour-force-market.html](https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/brief-analysis-labour-force-market.html)  
Updates from the labour market: [https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis\\_prevention\\_and\\_recovery/policy-brief-updates-from-the-labor-market-in-albania-during-co.html](https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/policy-brief-updates-from-the-labor-market-in-albania-during-co.html)

of 4,141 beneficiaries. The re-conceptualisation included adoption of five new and reformed programmes, as well as two programmes to address workers laid off due to Covid-19 and also informal workers that were laid off during the crisis, significantly consolidating the legal and regulatory framework for implementation of the ALMPs.<sup>76</sup>

- A comprehensive and integrated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework was developed for all institutions responsible for implementing the employment and VET policies, and for the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019–2022, aiding institutions in charge to improve their performance and facilitate monitoring of NESS 2019–2022 implementation. A comprehensive VET review was finalised<sup>77</sup> and a roadmap designed to achieve the systemic engagement of the private sector in VET. A plan for optimisation of the VET providers was prepared based on a multi-dimensional analysis of the socio-economic situation and the labour market and assessment of VET providers in the four regions—North, Central, South-East and South-West—of the country and the respective municipalities. The VET optimisation plan was endorsed in September and commenced implementation in October. A model for accreditation of (public and private) VET providers in Albania, including a road map and a capacity development plan for the National Agency for VET and Qualifications (NAVETQ) and VET providers, was developed and consulted with the key stakeholders. Beneficiaries of the accreditation model include NAVETQ and all public, and in the mid-term term also private,

<sup>76</sup> The majority of the participating unemployed jobseekers benefited from the two Covid-19 ALMPs, the implementation of which was deferred due to the pandemic and the lockdown measures of March–June 2020.

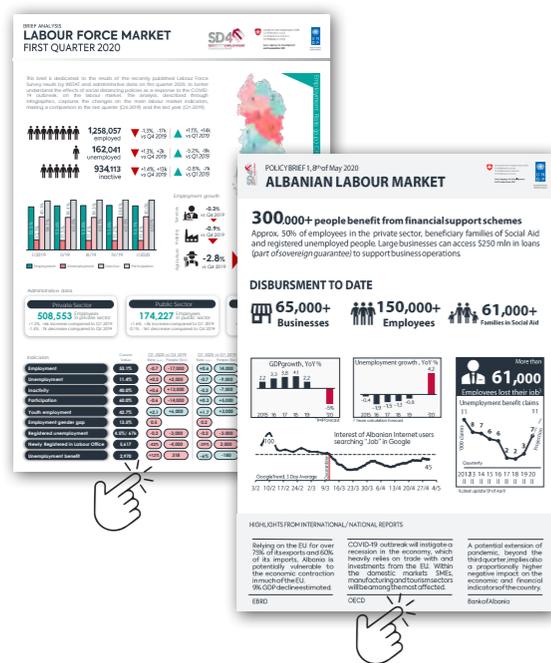
<sup>77</sup> The review maps out the current model of VET in Albania and generates a common understanding among all stakeholders about the system set-up, the level of the reforms implementation and governance, identifying the challenges that hamper the system from responding effectively to the skills demand in the labour market.

VET providers. The network of some 44 public VET providers, as well as NAVETQ, benefited from UNDP support to implement the second round of self-assessment, a crucial dimension of quality assurance. An Internet-based platform was designed to support implementation of the self-assessment, and further quality assurance, processes, facilitating self-assessment implementation to all public VET providers.

- The Self-Employment Programme, a flagship programme piloted by SD4E, was designed in the form of an employment promotion programme and was adopted by the Council of Ministers (Decision no. 348, of 29.04.2020). All necessary operational guidelines were prepared and implementation began in October.

Under the ILO project Access to Justice in Labour Disputes in Albania, 2019–2022, financed by the government of Sweden, technical assistance was provided to MoFE and social partners to strengthen and improve the system of amicable resolution of labour disputes, resulting in the following achievements during 2020, contributing to SDG 8:

- A specialised customised training programme and materials for conciliators and mediators on mediation and conciliation skills was developed to provide specialised training and coaching of mediators of the State Mediation Network and members of the thirteen (1 national and 12 district) State Conciliation Offices, to be implemented in cooperation with the ILO International Training Centre and MoFE (2021–2022). Besides, throughout 2020, a network of 40 mediators in the regional and local employment offices were capacitated through a series of (7) online trainings conducted by MoFE and ILO on how best to deliver quality mediation services on labour disputes. In addition, the working infrastructure of public mediators and conciliation offices at MoFE and



on skills anticipation in the wine production value chain, whose methodology will be replicated in other sectors to capacitate the employers' organisation to effectively contribute to the sector skills committees at NAVETQ.

- The National Agency for Skills and Employment was supported in developing decent work information packages for unemployed jobseekers in the frame of the ILO regional project Promoting Inclusive Labour Market Solutions in the Western Balkans, funded by the Austrian Development Agency.

### Implementation Challenges

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, engagement of the private sector in employment promotion and VET has been the most crucial challenge that both sectors—employment and VET—experienced during 2020. While private sector engagement in VET will need to be addressed in the mid-term, as the entire VET system is operating based on combined modalities of presence and distant learning with regard to implementation of the ALMPs, UNDP advised and supported MoFE in designing and applying less strict eligibility criteria for participating companies. The criteria are reflected especially in the two new ALMPs aiming at the employment of workers laid off due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Another challenge for the state institutions was to understand the labour market performance during the pandemic and to address its impacts on employment. The SD4E prepared regular updates on the labour market performance to inform MoFE, other line ministries and donor agencies active in the sector. In addition, the Covid-19 restrictions heavily impacted the capacity building activities with the labour disputes mediators' network. Mitigation measures included postponing some of the activities, while shifting online for some others.

NAES was upgraded with the provision of IT equipment (55), and MoFE was supported with network equipment (routers & firewalls) to enable operationalisation of the industrial relations and labour dispute management system.

- The tripartite working group<sup>78</sup> drafted a set of recommended changes to the current public ALDR procedures, with i) a draft guideline on mediation and conciliation procedures, and ii) a practical pocket guide for mediators and conciliators. In addition, a customised manual for employers and workers on preventing and handling labour disputes in the workplace was developed, aiming to inform and enable employers and workers to establish and use effective procedures for preventing and peacefully resolving labour disputes in the workplace.
- The employers' association developed a report

<sup>78</sup> Established by MoFE Order no. 233, dated 25.09.2020 'On the establishment of the working group for improving public procedures of mediation and conciliation of labour disputes' and composed of representatives from government institutions (MoFE, NAES, SLSSI) and workers' and employers' organisations.

## OUTPUT 3.3 - AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 

**Contributing UN Agencies**  
FAO, UN WOMEN
- 

**Contributing Partners**  
Governments of Albania, Sweden, Turkey, Hungary
- 

**Financial Amount (USD)**  
1, 053, 500
- 

**Alignment with SDGs**  
**Goals:** 1, 2, 5, 8, 12  
**Targets:** 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 5.a, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, 12.1, 12.2

### Implementation Progress

Agriculture in Albania is characterised by a large number of smallholder farms. None of the 350,000 small farms in Albania are sufficiently competitive. Rural tourism and direct marketing can offer additional income and employment opportunities, specifically for women and young people, to bring about rural development and to increase the attractiveness of the sector as a future place of work. Supporting access to finance, land, advisory services and information and communication technologies is important in overcoming challenges for, particularly, smallholders, promoting e-Agriculture as the digitalisation of agriculture offers new opportunities to develop the sector. FAO's interventions in this area aim to strengthen the technical and entrepreneurial capacities of farmers, enabling them to add value to primary production and to implement a diversified household income strategy, adopting proven practices for rural income diversification. Such interventions should help smallholders and family farms access existing investment funds, while also improving the capacities of government, farmers associations and other stakeholders to boost the rural economy and raise living conditions. By the end of 2020, three farming communities (60 farmers) in the regions of Belsh, Korce and Malesi e Madhe had strengthened capacities in quality and safety in selected value chains (i.e.



STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES IN QUALITY AND SAFETY IN SELECTED VALUE CHAINS

dairy, fruits and vegetables, MAPs) and needs<sup>79</sup> were identified for provision of financial support and production equipment. With contribution from the government of Albania to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, these farmers were also trained in accessing finance, land and agricultural value chain skills. In addition, the e-Agriculture Strategy was developed and submitted to MoARD for adoption. Training was provided to 40 persons from MoARD, local extension services, NGOs and private businesses to strengthen their capacities to implement the Strategy for rural, small-scale producers and marginalised communities. Another 20 stakeholders from central government (MoARD), academia (Agricultural University of Tirana) and NGOs gained strengthened knowledge and skills on implementation of the national Food Loss and Waste

Strategy through a training provided by FAO. All the above interventions contribute to achievement of SDG targets 1.1, 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5 and 8.6.

With more than 40 percent of the workforce working in agriculture and almost half of the population living in rural areas, Albania's agriculture is the backbone of the country's economic development. The sector plays a key role in the integration of Albania into the EU and in it achieving the SDGs. In 2020, FAO's support to Albania's process of EU integration included: (i) capacity development for six technical staff from MoARD in statistics and policy formulation on EU integration, and 15 technical staff from INSTAT and MoARD on monitoring of indicators for SDGs 2, 5, 13, 14 and 15; (ii) development of the national regulatory framework on product quality certification, including geographical indications and organic

and traditional products, and endorsement by government, along with capacity development provided to six MoARD staff; and (iii) strengthening of knowledge and capacities of 20 technical staff from public and private chain actors on food quality and safety standards. These efforts contribute to the achievement of SDG targets 8.2, 12.1 and 12.2. Moreover, as the economic strengthening of rural women continues to face difficulties in terms of property ownership, rights to resources and access to financial and advisory services, FAO and UN Women developed a project entitled Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT), which will address all these issues. The project document and budget were endorsed by the funding partner—the government of Italy—in December 2020 and project implementation will start in 2021.

Through FAO support, a pilot national school food and nutrition project is being implemented for the last two years in Baldushk (Tirane Municipality), in collaboration with the private sector and public institutions. The purpose of the project is to (i) establish a model of horizontal (group of farmers) and vertical cooperation (farmer to collector or processor) for quality milk production and safety that will also increase small farmers' incomes; (ii) link local producers to school feeding programmes; (iii) promote healthy dietary practices; and (iv) implement intensive health and nutrition education and training to school teachers, children and parents. The pilot model will also be replicated to the communities of larger farmers to promote economic development of rural areas. Given the importance of a strong partnership with the private sector in agriculture for connecting producers with consumers, FAO strengthened capacities of 80 farmers and five private veterinarians from Baldushk with regard to dairy quality and safety. Training modules and materials, including awareness-raising materials on school milk to

school were prepared and distributed to teachers, school children and parents in one school in Tirane Municipality. These efforts contribute to achievement of SDG targets 2.3, 2.4 and 8.2. Food safety standards in the dairy production value chain are of significant importance for Albania's aspirations to join the EU.

### Implementation Challenges

Limited capacities of MoARD with regard to EU integration negotiations might influence preparations for Chapter 11, as well as preparation of the approximation plan and renewal of the Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (ISARD) 2014–2020. The low absorption of both national and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development (IPARD) funds, especially for smallholders, who remain a marginalised stratum, remains a problem and is delaying the emergence of results of the impact of the support provided already by government, IPARD and development partners to smallholders. Moreover, economic strengthening of rural women continues to face difficulties in terms of property ownership, rights to resources, and access to financial and advisory services.

<sup>79</sup> Such as equipment, training in equipment use, and in quality and safety standards and marketing of products.

## OUTPUT 3.4 - CULTURE

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



### Implementation Progress

In response to the catastrophic earthquake of November 2019, UNESCO supported elaboration of a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) for the culture sector, supporting government in ensuring more than EUR 50 million from the EU for rehabilitation of monuments and sites in earthquake-affected areas. Furthermore, as the direct result of the PDNA, the government of Switzerland ensured funding for implementation of the project 'Digitisation of the archive of the National Institute for Cultural Heritage and the establishment of a protocol for emergency evacuation of the archive', whose implementation in 2020 achieved the following results: (i) creation of digital archive, preservation of documentation against possible disasters, and establishment of a digital database for all cultural monuments; (ii) improvement of the infrastructure of the internal network of the institution, as well as protecting information and documents from computer malfunction; (iii) establishment of procedures and responsibilities of Institute staff, to enable continuous updating of information at the projected initial level. As a result of this project, specialists of the National Institute for Cultural Heritage, as well as all other stakeholders, can consult documents without necessarily having to be physically present in archive premises and without interacting with the original documents,

which are further protected from degradation and physical damage. Equally importantly, a rich archive collection will be safeguarded for future generations and the knowledge and appreciation will be supported through facilitated access to 4,100 technical dossiers of various monuments and sites, 47,700 negatives of films and microfilms, 256,000 photographs in colour, and black and white, and 28,500 other materials in various formats in colour, and black and white.

In addition, UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture conducted a socio-economic impact assessment of the cultural sector in Albania,<sup>80</sup> identifying the full impact of the Covid-19 crisis, through capturing information on public measures and provisions to support the cultural institutions, artists and cultural and creative industries, and determining the effects of the impact upon these groups. It also explored new ways of production, dissemination and consumption of culture. This sectoral report fed into the UNCT Albania Socio-Economic Recovery and Response Plan for Albania,<sup>81</sup> which provides a scan of the current situation and sets out UN's consolidated offer of socio-economic recovery and response support to complement the Government of Albania National Response Plan (to be released shortly) and the current National Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan.



<sup>80</sup> The methodology consisted of (i) collection of quantitative and qualitative data through desk reviews, (ii) interviews with the Ministry of Culture and culture sector representatives, (iii) conducting of two surveys, of: cultural institutions (full-coverage survey, targeting 29 public cultural institutions with 920 employees operating under MoC, and 100% response rate), and cultural and creative industries (performed on a sample of 10 cultural and creative enterprises). With no pretention of being representative of the full extent of the impacts of Covid-19, the results of the surveys provide snapshots on how the sector is coping throughout the different phases of the crisis, and a set of recommendations and measures to be undertaken in order for the sector to strive and survive.

<sup>81</sup> <https://albania.un.org/en/86279-un-albania-covid-19-socio-economic-recovery-and-response-plan>

## OUTCOME 4

# Environment and Climate Change

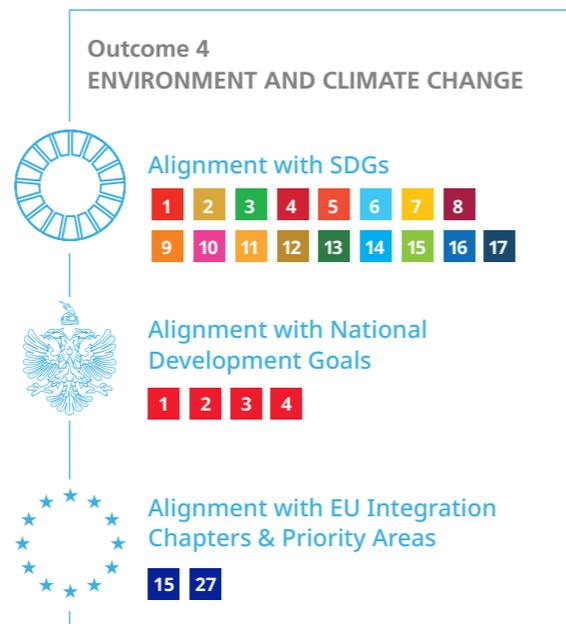
Economic growth priorities, policies, and programmes of the Government of Albania are inclusive, sustainable, and gender-responsive, with greater focus on competitiveness, decent jobs and rural development.

Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change—consists of three outputs focusing on 1) DRR and Climate Change, 2) Natural Resources, and 3) Earthquake Recovery.

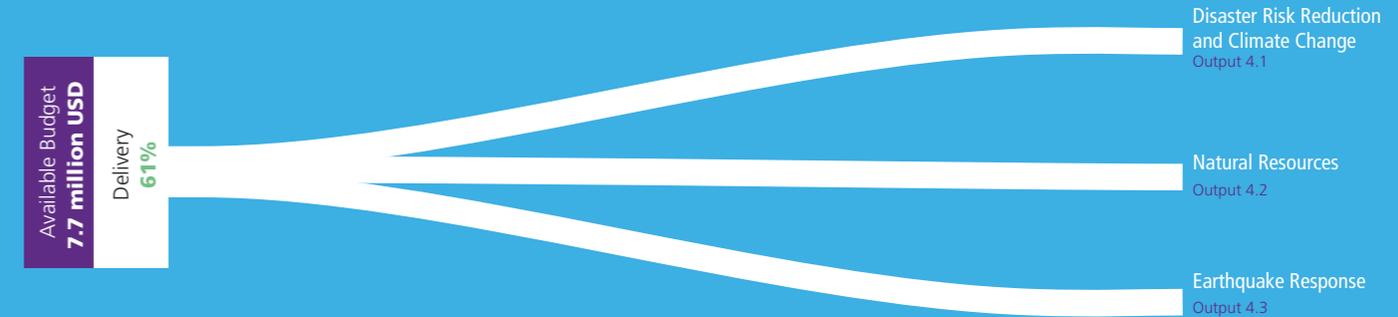
This outcome supports the government in achieving four priorities of NSDI 2015–2020: 1) EU membership, 2) Growth through sustainable resources and territorial development, 3) Investing in people and social cohesion, and 4) Consolidate good governance, democracy and rule of law. It also contributes to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

The total available budget for implementation of Outcome 4 in 2020 was USD 7.7 million from UN core and global non-core resources and contributions from the governments of Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, as well as the EU and GEF. The outcome delivery was 61 percent.

Assessment measured against progress of achievement shows that all eighteen indicators are on track. For further details regarding progress made against the indicators please check Annex A of the present report.



## Outcome 4 delivery (USD million), 2020



## INDICATOR

INDICATOR	Baseline 2016-2017	Status 2020
↑ Extent to which comprehensive measures - plans, strategies, policies, programmes and budgets - are being implemented to achieve low-emission and/or climate-resilient development objectives	34.22% RES in energy portfolio	34,86%
↑ % of farmers accessing disaster early warning system	0%	5% Female, 30 %
↑ Number of hectares of land that are managed sustainably as protected areas under a conservation, sustainable use or access- and benefits-sharing regime	9,424 ha	Total 76,284 ha - Butrint 9,424 ha, Prespa 27,750 ha, Divjaka 22,230 ha, Dajiti 3,300 ha, Llogara 1,010 ha, Karanburun - Sazan 12,570 ha
↑ No. of sites, including World Heritage sites, with costed DRR plans/ interventions, that are gender-sensitive	0 (UNESCO) sites	3
↑ Categories of Protected areas and Biosphere reserves with working, sustainable financial and legal mechanisms	0	3
↑ Presence and quality of the First Biennial Update Report of Albania to the UNFCCC that is gender sensitive.	0	Final Draft of BUR under peer review process NDC under revision
↑ Number of financial mechanisms and 'pipelines' developed to access climate finance, including GCF	0	National GCF country programme developed, identifying 6 pipeline programs
↑ No of targeted children and parents/care givers benefiting from child protection in emergency services.	500	2,120 children and 1,350 adults
↑ No of targeted child protection professionals capacitated to deliver quality protection services in emergency settings	0	281
↑ Number of teachers skilled in Disaster Risk reduction strategies and other inclusive methodologies	500	1,200
↑ Number of children (boys and girls) accessing online learning (in schools or via other distant learning opportunities)	300,000 children of all ages and cycles of pre-university education.	350,000 registered users 900,000 clicks daily
↑ No. of schools, community infrastructure facilities revitalized and refurbished	0	Contracts for construction works are signed for 22 educational facilities, while the works started in 15 of them (six education facilities are being reconstructed - 7.000 m2; nine educational facilities are being repaired - 25.000 m2).
↑ No. of earthquake affected cultural heritage properties are rehabilitated and revitalized, incl. gender sensitive infrastructure/design and socio-economic measures	0	14 historical sites approved, work to start in 2021.

## OUTPUT 4.1 - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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

**Contributing UN Agencies**  
UNDP, UNIDO, UNEP, UNESCO, FAO

**Contributing Partners**  
Governments of Italy, Norway, the GEF

**Financial Amount (USD)**  
725, 508

**Alignment with SDGs**  
**Goals:** 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17  
**Targets:** 7.2, 9.1, 11.2, 11.b, 12.1, 12.2, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 15.1, 15.3, 17.9

### Implementation Progress

Important initiatives, supported by UNDP, were approved by the Albanian Parliament in 2020, advancing the environmental legal and policy framework. These include, to name but a few, the Climate Change Law; the legal basis that regulates the Nagoya Protocol on access to, and benefit sharing of, genetic resources; and ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Also, as Albania is part of UNDP Climate Promise initiative for enhancement of countries' climate pledges, under the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Partnership UNDP was requested by the government to lead and coordinate the NDC revision process, taking into consideration the work already conducted under the first Biennial Update Report (BUR), whose finalisation is expected in 2021Q1. UNDP is also supporting review of several strategic documents and policies on DRR at various levels, as well as relevant trainings and consultations on Capacity Assessment and Sendai tools application. Moreover, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Country Programme is developed for Albania, supported by UNEP, utilising GCF Readiness, pending endorsement by the Albanian government.

Aiming to shift from unsustainable to sustainable land use in forestry and pastures, by mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management approaches, UNEP supported the development of two forestry by-laws: one pursuant to Article 4/2 of the ministerial

decision on criteria for the classification of forests, and one pursuant to Article 16/4 of the ministerial guideline on the general criteria of professionalism for the appointment of employees to the structure responsible for forestry in the municipalities. Furthermore, national and local government capacities were strengthened through a series of capacity building activities and by identifying, mapping and prioritising degraded forests and pastureland in Kolonja Municipality (21,288 ha). The above accomplishments contribute to achievement of SDG targets 13.2 and 15.2 (indicator 15.2.1).

Capacities of government staff and farmers were strengthened towards climate change adaptation and mitigation actions and how to access related climate finance instruments, through FAO support in conducting training workshops, capacitating ten public staff at the local level and 80 farmers (30% female), and technical assistance to prepare funding proposals for the main climate finance windows. Also, 15 public staff at the local level, as well as 80 farmers (30% females), increased skills and awareness on the early warning systems, 20 public staff and 40 farmers (30% females) on the Climate Smart Agriculture concept and relevant agricultural and landscape interventions (conservation agriculture, ecosystem-based services, flood and drought management). In addition, UNICEF was an important driver of change for climate change awareness and DRR practices in schools. Under the framework of the joint project 'Effective management of natural resources supporting the green economy for a sustainable development of Vjosa Valley-Zagori', with the financial support of the government of Norway, UNICEF worked with ASCAP to develop a state-of-the-art methodology for climate change and DRR, increase the capacities of the education workforce on DRR, benefiting ten schools and 98 teachers in the Vjosa Valley-Zagori

area, set up DRR commission in all ten schools, and prepare school plans for emergency preparedness.

Renewable energies derived from biomass to fight climate change effects were supported by UNIDO through encouragement of SMEs in the olive production sector to invest in bio-energy machinery, with pilot demonstrations installed in nine enterprises. The application of modern biomass technologies stirred policy actions that led to the development of a pipeline of projects for replication in other sectors. Aiming to ensure sustainability, UNIDO increased national capacities of five industry associations and banks, through showcasing business models, case studies and successful stories, since these organisations are in the best position to replicate the activities and build up the market from the benefits of bio-energy technologies. Meanwhile, 15 agro-processing owners were supported through the feasibility guidelines and manuals developed. The above accomplishments contribute towards achievement of SDG targets 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 9.3 and 13.2.

### Implementation Challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected the tourism sector, evidencing a decrease of 71 percent in the number of foreign tourists, due to the protocols that countries have established in the period, while maintaining a stable situation regarding the number of Albanian tourists. In addition, it brought significant delays in procuring and importing relevant bio-energy technologies from other countries (China, Germany, Italy), as well as limited SMEs in accessing credit opportunities and investing in bio-energy technologies due to reduced confidence and a reduction of credit overall. UN agencies had to prioritise activities and adjust the implementation approach.

## OUTPUT 4.2 - NATURAL RESOURCES

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



**Contributing UN Agencies**  
UNDP, UNESCO, FAO, WHO, UNECE, UN WOMEN, ILO



**Contributing Partners**  
Governments of Croatia, Italy, Norway, the GEF



**Financial Amount (USD)**  
1, 344, 575



**Alignment with SDGs**  
**Goals:** 3, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17  
**Targets:** 3.9, 3.d, 6.1, 12.1, 12.4, 13.1, 13.2, 14.5, 14.a, 15.1, 15.3, 15.5, 17.9, 17.14, 17.19

### Implementation Progress

Political representatives of Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia signed a political declaration and approved a Strategic Action Plan for the sustainable management of the Drin River Basin with more than 100 actions aimed at managing water in an area in which 1.6 million people live, supported by UNDP. In addition, following implementation of a programme on groundwater monitoring, UNESCO contracted the drilling of a monitoring well, strengthened capacities of technical staff (5, total; 2, female) of the Albanian Geological Survey, an advisory institution of government, on how to access data and use the monitoring well, and translated the well's operation manual into Albanian. Moreover, as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session (Baku 2019), a joint World UNESCO Heritage Centre-ICOMOS-IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission reviewed the overall state of the conservation of the trans-boundary property 'Natural and Cultural Heritage of Ohrid Region', progress made in implementation of the previous World Heritage Committee and the mission's recommendations,<sup>82</sup> and submitted a report to government for consideration and outlining follow-up actions for implementation in 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Including the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee in its Decision 43COM 8B.9, when the Committee noted with concern the threats facing the cultural and natural attributes of the property and encouraged the States Parties 'to develop, as a matter of urgency, a joint transboundary approach to address these threats to the values, integrity and the serious protection and management issues facing Lake Ohrid.'



DRIN RIVER BASIN

The first integrated transparent and open source Environment Information and Management System is now operational in Albania, supported by UNDP, and in use by the National Environment Agency, with trainings at local level institutions continuing to be conducted on data protocols. The first experimental field of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants was established, also with UNDP support, at the Agricultural University of Tirana to support

academic staff with field application and research, provide hands-on experience to students, bring the research and academia closer to the private sector and foster exchange for better and sustainable results. Some 60 participants in five prefectures were trained in the Access and Benefit Sharing system of genetic resources and nine CSOs were involved in conservation activities for species that have genetic and bioprospecting (marketing and research) values.

Contributing to SDG targets 3.d and 13.1, and following the November earthquake, WHO provided technical support for the development and update of the Emergency Operation Plan of MoHSP and the National Centre of Medical Emergencies, which also helped to mount the response to the ensuing Covid-19 emergency. A total of 16 experts from public health and the ministries of environment and agriculture participated in a tabletop exercise on flash floods, strengthening experts' knowledge, practising analytical planning and implementing skills in an interactive multi-sectoral mode.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and in close consultation and cooperation with line ministries, UNDP supported the development of the Blue Economy Programme, which sets out the strategic vision of the government in the maritime sector and an action plan for mid- to long-term interventions. A total of 41 legal acts were developed to ensure 100 percent compliance with EU Directives and Regulations, and 56 participants from seven maritime administration institutions were trained in (i) monitoring flag and fleet performance; (ii) port management, governance and master planning; (iii) maritime education and training, including Manila amendments on standards of training certification and watchkeeping; (iv) Harbour Master's Office; and (v) general introduction to the global legislative maritime framework and the Paris MoU on Safety and Security.

The Wild Birds Rehabilitation Centre, the first of its kind in Albania and the Balkan region, was established with UNDP support, functioning as a shelter for vulnerable and injured species. The centre has treated ten different species to date. An e-Learning platform is in place, providing training to personnel of the Centre and Protected Areas (PAs), hosting currently ten training modules, on

sustainable management and financing of PAs. By the end of 2020, 50 personnel of PAs had been trained. The above accomplishments contribute to the achievement of SDG targets 14.5, 15.1 and 15.5.

Under the framework of the joint project 'Effective management of natural resources supporting the green economy for a sustainable development of Vjosa Valley-Zagori', with the financial support of the government of Norway, UNDP conducted an assessment of the natural and socio-economic potential in the area to provide a protection status to Vjosa River in line with EU and international standards, and at the same time support the development of a viable ecotourism offer. Vulnerability and exposure to climate risks is being assessed in the lower parts of the river, for current and future climate impacts on agriculture, water resources, health, natural disasters, biodiversity, health, soil erosion and hydrogeology as part of the fourth national communication to UNFCCC. With the aim of identifying the potential for job creation in the green economy, and with focus on women and youth in the upper Vjosa, ILO conducted research into labour market opportunities in the green economy sector, specifically tourism, applying the Market Systems Methodology (MSA).<sup>83</sup> The methodology identified the root causes of prevailing constraints in the tourism sector value chains and generated knowledge on how to improve both employment opportunities and enterprise growth. Following up on MSA, UN Women launched an initiative for promoting social entrepreneurship and creating models for inclusive women-owned social enterprises in the upper Vjosa river basin area. The methodological approach was developed for outreach and awareness raising on social entrepreneurship and for conducting concrete field activities for capacity

83 ILO\_MSA Tourism Sector in Vjosa river region

building of key stakeholders (local governments, CSOs and other relevant players). An information video<sup>84</sup> aimed at raising awareness on women's social entrepreneurship in the Vjosa upper river basin, with focus on promoting and improving consumption of women's products, with the aim of mitigating the economic consequences they are suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic. The communication and capacity strengthening plan will be developed and piloted in the municipalities of Tepelena and Permet—rural administrative units in the Vjosa river basin—with prospects for the same to be replicated and used by MoHSP across the country, with the aim of increasing women's access to the social enterprises fund. Some 25 public staff at central and local levels and 120 farmers (30% females) built capacities, supported by FAO, to cope with the impact of climate change on agriculture and disasters, risk reduction, resilience (PDNA) and climate change adaptation in the Vjosa river basin. In addition, soil mapping and analysis are ongoing to prepare policies and new approaches for management of natural resources and climate action in the Vjosa Valley-Zagori area, with a specific focus on sustainable use of land. The above accomplishments contribute to achievement of SDG targets 3.d, 12.1, 13.1, 15.1, 15.3 and 15.5.

UNECE supported the development of policy packages on medical waste management including a draft law on medical waste. In the area of housing and urban development, a workshop on 'National Housing Policy in Albania: Financing for affordable housing and the role of housing agencies',<sup>85</sup> including a dedicated session on Building Resilience to Emergencies in Albania, discussed the challenges and opportunities of

84 <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/videos?id=ffd-995ed-7dde-4206-9cf3-a5f1e4f9c2ff>

85 <https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/events/online-workshop-national-housing-policy-albania-financing>

housing finance and the present and future role of the National Housing Agency (NHA) in Albania based on relevant international best practices. The outcomes of the workshop have been used for revision of the National Housing Strategy of Albania and the future role of the NHA, and for developing local housing plans for three pilot municipalities in the country. The workshop also contributed to the collection of best practices for affordable housing for the UNECE #Housing2030 initiative, as well as for the start of development of a Country Profile on Urban Development and Housing of Albania, scheduled for completion in 2021. Aiming to enhance the socio-economic recovery following the pandemic and contribute to urban resilience, UNECE implemented a project 'Post Covid-19 Recovery in Informal Settlements in the ECE Region', with Tirana as one of the target cities. An assessment report of selected informal settlements was prepared, providing an up-to-date understanding on the status and efforts to formalise informal settlements and how they have been affected by Covid-19. The above accomplishments contribute to the achievement of SDG 11 (targets 11.1, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.b, 11.c) and SDG targets 3.d, 12.4 and 17.14.

## Implementation Challenges

Absence of an adequate mechanism to address a joint trans-boundary approach and enable implementation of the World Heritage Committee's Decision 43 COM 8B.9, including its specific recommendations, and previous Committee decisions and mission recommendations, presents a current challenge.

## OUTPUT 4.3 - EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

Self-resilience of earthquake affected vulnerable communities is fostered, and livelihoods rebuilt through implementation of post-earthquake recovery measures, guided by Albania's Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)

### Contributing UN Agencies

UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNOPS, FAO

### Contributing Partners

Governments of Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden, Netherlands, United Kingdom, US-AID, Poland, Norway, Finland, the EU

### Financial Amount (USD)

5,697,420

### Alignment with SDGs

**Goals:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17

**Targets:** 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.a, 4.c, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.9, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, 9.b, 10.2, 10.4, 11.4, 13.1, 16.2, 17.3

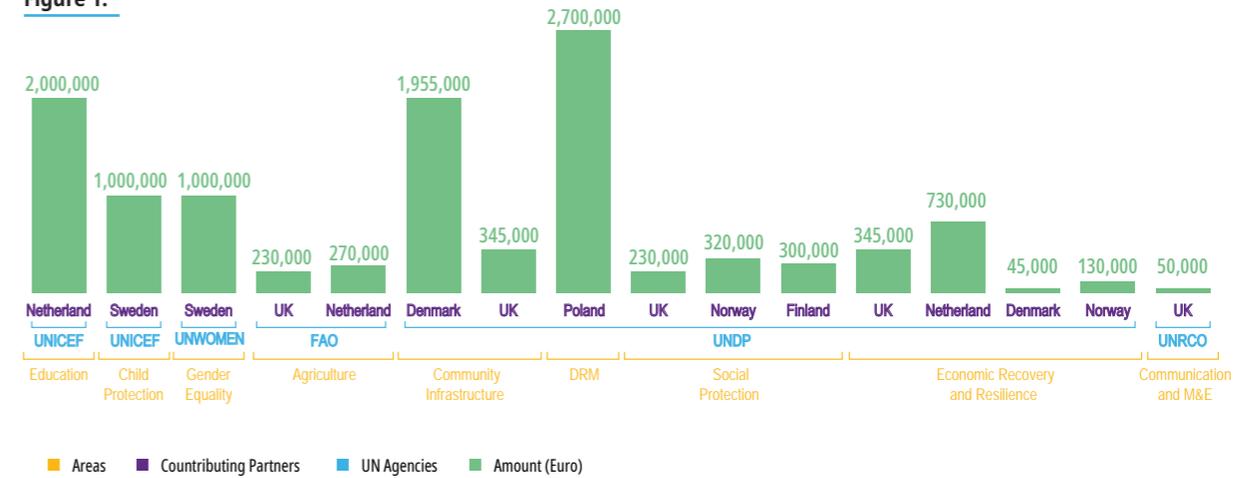
The early days of 2020 found Albania mobilising efforts to recover from the devastating November earthquake (6.3 Richter scale magnitude), from which 51 people died, more than 900 were injured, about 17,000 temporarily displaced, more than 200,000 (7% of the population) in eleven municipalities were affected, and thousands of buildings destroyed or seriously damaged, including public and private infrastructure, homes, schools and health-care facilities. The government, with rapid support from the international community, undertook immediate search and rescue operations quickly followed by short-term life-saving assistance for those displaced. The government received immediate emergency support from UN agencies in Albania (UNDP, WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF; see publication *UN support for Albania earthquake recovery*).<sup>86</sup> A UN Disaster Assistance Coordination team organised by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was attached to the support provided by the EU-led Civil Protection Team. Moreover, following the prime minister's request, the EU, UN and World Bank undertook a PDNA,<sup>87</sup> released on 5 February 2020 to support preparations of the Together for Albania Donor Conference,<sup>88</sup> which resulted in pledges to

<sup>86</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/un\\_support\\_to\\_albania\\_earthquake\\_recovery.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/un_support_to_albania_earthquake_recovery.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> This assessed the impact of the earthquake on affected sectors and populations, studying the socio-economic development of affected districts, and at a wider national level. It defined a recovery strategy with short-, medium- and long-term needs, priority actions and costing, and an intervention framework. The PDNA identified a total need of EUR 1.076 billion.

<sup>88</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/international-donors-conference-albania-earthquake\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/international-donors-conference-albania-earthquake_en)

Figure 1.



an amount of EUR 1.15 billion. The UN received a medal of honour from the Prime Minister of Albania in appreciation of the organisation's rapid support during the immediate response phase.<sup>89</sup>

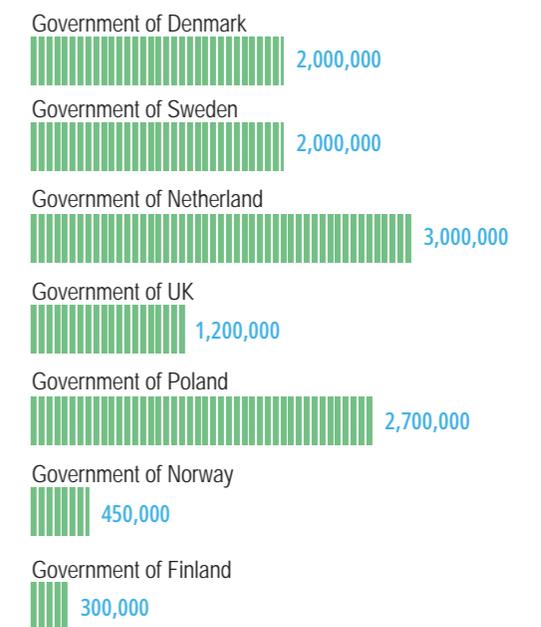
Aligned to PDNA and in collaboration with government to support the reconstruction and recovery efforts to 'build back better',<sup>90</sup> successful resource mobilisation efforts resulted in EUR 11.65 million unearmarked contributions to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund from the governments of Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the UK to support national earthquake efforts in the areas

<sup>89</sup> The certificate says: "In recognition of the work of the Search and Rescue unit of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team for extraordinary dedication in the search and rescue of lives of those affected by the earthquake, and for selflessness shown by all members of the unit in professionally helping the people in need, in extreme conditions."

<sup>90</sup> All construction will follow the Build Back Better (BBB) principle, applying sustainable building norms and providing an opportunity to sustainably reduce future risk. BBB will guide rebuilding stronger, safer and more disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems. This agenda will also contribute to building sustainable infrastructure. In terms of environmental sustainability considerations, the special measure will bring improvements to energy efficiency, which will be pursued through the reconstruction and rebuilding process of public buildings and at cultural heritage sites. This will help manage the carbon footprint for the buildings and sites, and reduce cost for the beneficiaries.

of (i) education, (ii) economic recovery and resilience, including agriculture, (iii) community infrastructure, (iv) social protection, (v) child protection, and (vi) gender equality (see table below).

Figure 2. Contributing Partners (EURO)





LAUNCHING EVENT OF THE UNICEF-WHO-MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION ONLINE TRAINING ON 'MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN EMERGENCIES'. UNICEF/ALBANIA/2020

Besides the allocation to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, direct funding to an amount of EUR 65 million was provided by the EU to UNDP for 58 school reconstructions or refurbishment in the affected eleven municipalities, and EUR 40 million to UNOPS for rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites affected by the earthquake. In addition, direct funding was provided by the government of Luxembourg and USAID to UNICEF to support most vulnerable children and parents affected by the earthquake, especially those still living in tents or other temporary shelters, with psychosocial counselling and emergency and out-of-hours response services. Also, the government of Switzerland contributed to the digitalisation of the National Institute for Cultural Heritage archive being implemented by UNESCO.

The new output 4.3 'Earthquake Response' was added to the Government of Albania-UN PoCSD 2017-2021, Outcome 4 Environment and Climate Change, which includes planning, monitoring and reporting efforts of UN agencies, allowing for greater accountability and transparency on the use of resources.

### Implementation Progress

UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, UNOPS) supported government to identify and address areas of emergency support and immediate needs, aiming to reduce the impact on the poorest, and other vulnerable groups.

### Child Protection

Some 2,120 children and 1,350 adults (74% more than planned target), severely affected by the earthquake and still residing in temporary shelters, benefited and strengthened their coping abilities through psychosocial counselling provided by UNICEF and its partner organisation Nisma-ARSIS. Sets of hygienic items were also provided to them for better protection from Covid-19 spread. In addition, 51 statutory child protection workers were supported with on-the-job coaching and case management technical assistance, enabling them to open and manage 231 new child protection cases, delivering assistance through six rapid response mobile protection teams, covering 23 administrative units and 50 geographic locations. Emergency funds received from the governments of the United States and Luxembourg contributed to the achievement of the above results, towards fulfilment of SDG target 16.2.

Another 230 frontline professionals (40% increase from target) from child protection, social services, health, education and justice attended an eight-week online training in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies,<sup>91</sup> organised jointly by UNICEF, WHO and MoHSP, addressing the capacity development needs identified by the Child Protection in Emergencies Working group, led by UNICEF and established after the earthquake and which extended its mission to cover the Covid-19 response as well. The training was delivered by high-level experts from WHO and UNICEF offices, covering a wide range of issues, including the 2019 UNICEF guidelines on community-based mental health and psychosocial support<sup>92</sup> (also translated

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/albania/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergencies>

<sup>92</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/3001/file/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_psychosocial\\_support\\_guidelines\\_2019\\_.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/3001/file/Mental_health_and_psychosocial_support_guidelines_2019_.pdf) [https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/3006/file/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_psychosocial\\_support\\_guidelines\\_2019\\_Albanian.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/3006/file/Mental_health_and_psychosocial_support_guidelines_2019_Albanian.pdf)

into Albanian), as well as the issue of GBV during humanitarian emergencies. The eight modules of the training received a high attendance, indicating a high demand from professionals for capacity development and an appreciation of the high-level quality of the training sessions. Building on this experience, UNICEF in Albania will plan further support to the government by strengthening capacities of child protection and for other professionals to provide psychosocial support in humanitarian settings, directly contributing to fulfilment of SDG target 16.2.

### Education

UNICEF has been supporting the continuation of the learning process through the strengthening of the online platform [akademi.al](https://www.akademi.al) with focus on the most vulnerable children, those affected by the earthquake, children with disability, etc. In cooperation with MoESY, ten Tech-hubs are being set up in compulsory schools affected by earthquake where 5,000 students will be benefiting from a high-quality blended learning experience. In cooperation with ASCAP, UNICEF is also preparing a methodology for teacher training in ICT to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to use technology as a means to improve child learning outcomes.

To date, 350,000 children and teachers have registered on the [akademi.al](https://www.akademi.al) platform, 190,000 virtual classes have taken place, 1,200 teachers have been trained in using this online learning platform and 580 teachers, including in the schools and areas affected by the earthquake, have received training in the newly developed ICT standards. UNICEF is supporting 500 students in ten affected schools with after-classes lessons in maths and early literacy, drop-out prevention activities and social emotional skills building. Through additional funding, UNICEF had provided 500 tablets to affected children (World Bank).

UNICEF and ASCAP, with contributions from the government of Norway to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, are preparing a methodology on 'Disaster Risks Reduction and teacher training, and child awareness on disasters and preparedness', providing direct support to 22 schools affected by the earthquake.

The 'EU4Schools' programme, funded by the EU and implemented by UNDP in cooperation with the Albanian government, supports national and local governments in reducing further social and economic losses and accelerating the recovery process through 58 educational facility repairs and reconstruction, after the earthquake, in eleven affected municipalities: Durres, Kamez, Kavaje, Kruje, Kurbin, Lezhe, Mirdite, Rogozhine, Shijak, Tirane and Vore. In this context, the 'Build Back Better' and 'Build Back Together' approaches are twinned within each locality, foreseeing the cooperation of local government, communities and responsible authorities in designing and implementing recovery activities rapidly through transparent systems.<sup>93</sup>

In 2020, MoUs were signed with representatives of eleven municipalities<sup>94</sup> targeted by the EU4Schools programme; 25 consultation processes on schools designs were organised with the participation of around 900 representatives of communities, including teachers, children, parents and local authorities; 22 detailed designs for education facilities in the municipalities of Durres, Kamez, Kavaje, Kruje and Kurbin were prepared based on the Build Back

Better principles and the recommendations of the communities and local authorities participating in the consultation process, while works are ongoing for the preparation of five other detailed designs for education facilities. In addition, contracts for construction works are signed for 22 educational facilities, with works started in 15 of them: with six education facilities (7,000 m<sup>2</sup>) being reconstructed, and nine educational facilities being repaired (25,000 m<sup>2</sup>). A transparency and accessible portal [EU4Schools \(ctempurl.com\)](http://EU4Schools.ctempurl.com) has been designed to communicate with and involve the public in all the processes related to the implementation of this programme. Four professional education facilities in Durres, Kavaje and Tirane will be reconstructed by this programme, benefiting 2,670 students and 175 teachers, while work has started on the Hysen Cela Technological High School in Durres, benefiting 1,370 students.

### **Economic Recovery and Resilience**

UNDP is providing economic recovery and resilience support to micro and small enterprises affected by the earthquake in Durres Municipality, following an area-based survey of more than 150 family businesses in the city, applying In Motion methodology<sup>95</sup> to support businesses in their earthquake recovery. As a result, 15 family-run enterprises improved their commercial image and business operations through 15 hours of group training and 300 hours of technical assistance. Following the pandemic, businesses were supported also in adopting new ways of doing business, such as introducing and implementing digital tools. This piloting phase of In Motion methodology established a good basis for scaling up during 2021.

93 The specific objectives of the EU4Schools Programme are to: 1, support repairs and reconstruction, including basic furnishing and equipping of education facilities in municipalities affected by the earthquake according to the EU standards; 2, provide increased transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in the recovery process; and 3, improve capacities of central and local governments in accelerating the recovery processes according to the highest international standards.

94 The targeted municipalities to be covered by the EU4Schools Programme are Durres, Kamez, Kavaje, Kruje, Kurbin, Lezhe, Mirdite, Rogozhine, Shijak, Tirane, Vore.

95 [https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis\\_prevention\\_and\\_recovery/in-motion-programme--post-earthquake-economic-recovery-.html](https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/in-motion-programme--post-earthquake-economic-recovery-.html); <https://fb.watch/39BkyEXvMd/>

### **Cultural Heritage**

Under the EU4Culture project 2020–2024,<sup>96</sup> signed between the EU and UNOPS in October 2020, the earthquake-affected cultural heritage sites in Albania will be revitalised with a focus on boosting tourism and local economic development.<sup>97</sup> The project will be implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the wider cultural heritage community, including local institutions through grants. The project's Build Back Better approach<sup>98</sup> will be beneficial to local small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector, and its awareness raising initiatives will emphasise to the Albanian public the importance of cultural heritage in the economic progress of the country. The first project steering committee, held on 15 December 2020, approved fourteen historical sites for rehabilitation or revitalisation. The preparation of designs for these sites and proceeding with rehabilitation or revitalisation works will be conducted in 2021.

Cross-referenced with output 3.4 Culture, UNESCO supported the digitalization of the National Institute for Cultural Heritage archive, aiming to safeguard for future generations and provide facilitated access to 4,100 technical dossiers of various monuments and sites, 47,700 negatives of films and microfilms, 256,000 photographs in colour, and black and white, and 28,500 other materials in various formats in colour, and black and white.

96 The project will work towards achieving three main results following good governance and inclusive principles as a cross-cutting aspect: (i) Significant cultural heritage monuments and other cultural buildings or sites will be physically rehabilitated, improving the cultural and economic well-being of Albanian society; (ii) Economic and local development will be supported through cultural heritage revitalisation and valorisation, and improved capacities for its safeguarding, management, and promotion; and (iii) Improved awareness on the role of natural and cultural heritage in building a better future for Albania, through measuring and communicating the impact of culture for sustainable development.

97 [https://fb.watch/3h9cad\\_sgY/](https://fb.watch/3h9cad_sgY/)

98 Ensuring all repair work and any new infrastructure is constructed to International Standards in the selected sites.

### **Agriculture**

FAO supported 54 affected farming households and six business operators located in the municipalities of Durres, Kruje, Kurbin, Shijak, Tirane and Vore to re-assess their business viability to reflect the current needs for financial support, defined the criteria for grants to 100 beneficiaries (farmers and business operators) based on the identification of eligible investments needed, and assessed the needs for access to micro-finance to create employment opportunities and increase farmers' resilience. In addition, the agency supported the preparation of training modules to increase the capacities of farmers and agribusinesses, the extension service, financial institutions and relevant stakeholders in DRR and management and finalised the training agenda. These results contribute to achievement of SDG targets 1.1, 1.3, 2.3, 8.1, 8.2 and 8.4.

### **Gender Equality**

UN Women is in the process of preparing post-earthquake gender equality interventions related to strengthening women's resilience by reducing gender inequalities and supporting them in crisis-affected areas to have access to and benefit from GBV protection mechanisms. To date the agency has conducted initial meetings with representatives from the affected municipalities and based on its assessment will start activities in the coming weeks.

### **Community Infrastructure**

UNDP will contribute to modernizing, increasing the standards and strengthening the operational and response capacities of the Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service through supporting targeted

municipal fire protection and rescue services<sup>99</sup>: (i) standard capacity building for the firefighting teams of ten selected municipalities (Durrës, Fier, Kamzë, Kavajë, Krujë, Kurbin, Lezhë, Pogradec, Shijak, and Tirane), encompassing 45% of the total population of Albania; (ii) material and equipment support benefiting eight municipalities, providing services to 25% of the total population; and (iii) rehabilitation of the fire stations in three selected municipalities (Lezhë, Fier, Pogradec). Interventions will be fully in line with the National Cross-cutting Decentralization and Local Government Strategy, the application of the Law 152/2015 “On Fire Protection and Rescue Service” as well as with the most recent Law 45/2019 “On Civil Protection”.

## Implementation Challenges

The Covid-19 lockdown led to face-to-face meeting restrictions and partial or full closure of core social and protection services, which were critical for the population severely affected by the November earthquake. Through UNICEF’s investing in 24/7 mobile child protection response teams and regular mobile teams,<sup>100</sup> children and caregivers were provided with direct services. This intervention resulted in an eleven percent increase in case management.

Municipalities have various procedures for issuing construction permits, which when not duly communicated to programme partners cause significant delays in the processing of the permits. This required the UNDP EU4Schools programme team to follow up very closely with the respective municipalities to understand in-depth the requirements, inform the design companies on the prerogatives of construction permit application and update the implementation timeline to reflect the new situation. In addition, the lack of certified documentation of the land titles where schools are to be repaired and rebuilt caused delays in the design preparation process and applications for construction permits.

The school closures due to Covid-19 that forced schools to shift to online learning required a rapid response in terms of technological solutions and online learning content. UNICEF assisted MoESY with the development of the online platform [akademi.al](http://akademi.al) to provide high quality and interactive learning for all children. UNICEF worked in parallel with teacher training in ICT to support the challenges of the online learning process, and to provide vulnerable children with tablets to attend classes online.

As a direct consequence of the earthquake and Covid measures, which restricted the number of students studying in school at the same time, some schools are holding the lessons in shifts, allowing very little space for extra curricula activities, exchanges among teachers and students and capacity building exercises. UNICEF has maintained a solid coordination with school managements, local education offices and MoESY, ensuring that the activities fit with school schedules, combining face-to-face and online learning activities.

<sup>99</sup> The Standard Administrative Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Poland was signed in late December 2020. The project implementation will start in early January 2021 with the mobilization of staff and recruitment of sub-contractors for the reconstruction. The selection of municipalities has been done based on the priorities of the AFPRS and the intensity of impact caused by the November 2019 earthquake. Meanwhile, the Government of Denmark contribution to the reconstruction of the community infrastructure is still under discussion with the Government of Albania, pending agreement on the damaged infrastructure that would be reconstructed within Government of Denmark dedicated budget.

<sup>100</sup> Six mobile units were managed by Nisma-ARSIS, proving instrumental in delivering psychosocial counselling, case referrals and access to services directly in the twelve municipalities (23 administrative units) of Durrës, Elbasan, Kamez, Kavajë, Krujë, Krume, Kukes, Malesi e Madhe, Shkodër, Tirane, Vau i Dejës, Vore. Another mobile unit was set together with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection and tasked with monitoring case management across all child protection units and supporting them online and in the field with specific technical coaching.

## ACRONYMS

<b>ACCU</b>	Air Cargo Control Unit	<b>FLA</b>	Free Legal Aid
<b>ADISA</b>	Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania	<b>GANHRI</b>	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome	<b>GB-DV</b>	Gender-Based and Domestic Violence
<b>ALDR</b>	Amicable Labour Disputes Resolution	<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>ALL</b>	Albanian Lek	<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>ASCAP</b>	<i>Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar</i> (Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education)	<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ASPA</b>	Albanian School of Public Administration	<b>GE</b>	Gender Equality
<b>ASRH</b>	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Fund
<b>BUR</b>	Biennial Update Report	<b>GI</b>	Geographic Indications
<b>CCCVE</b>	Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism	<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>CCP</b>	Container Control Programme	<b>GoA</b>	Government of Albania
<b>CEB</b>	Council of Europe Development Bank	<b>GRB</b>	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
<b>CEC</b>	Central Elections Commission	<b>GREAT</b>	Gender Rural Equality and Tourism
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	<b>HACT</b>	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
<b>CPD</b>	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination	<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Cash Transfer
<b>CPU</b>	Child Protection Unit	<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child	<b>HPV</b>	Human Papillomavirus
<b>CRM</b>	Coordinated Referral Mechanism	<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>CSDA</b>	Consolidation of Service Delivery in Albania	<b>ICOMOS</b>	International Council on Monuments and Sites
<b>CSE</b>	Comprehensive Sexuality Education	<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>CSI</b>	Crime Scene Investigator	<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation	<b>IGME</b>	Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation
<b>CVE</b>	Countering Violent Extremism	<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>DAP</b>	Drug Advisory Programme	<b>ILS</b>	International Labour Standards
<b>DCM</b>	Decision of the Council of Ministers	<b>IMS</b>	Information Management System
<b>DDGG</b>	Department for Development and Good Governance	<b>IMSPSD</b>	Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery
<b>DOCO</b>	Development Operations Coordination Office	<b>INSTAT</b>	National Institute of Statistics
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction	<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>ECARO</b>	Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia	<b>IPARD</b>	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>IPC</b>	Infection Prevention and Control
<b>EVAC</b>	Ending Violence against Children	<b>IPMG</b>	Integrated Policy Management Group
<b>EVAWIA</b>	Elimination of Violence Against Women in Albania	<b>IRA</b>	Integrity Risk Assessment
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	<b>ISARD</b>	Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>FAS</b>	Front Office Achievement Score	<b>ISDA</b>	Innovation for Service Delivery
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment	<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
		<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
		<b>IYCF</b>	Infant and Young Child Feeding

<b>J4C</b>	Justice for Children	<b>PA</b>	People's Advocate	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>JEC</b>	Joint Executive Committee	<b>PBF</b>	Peacebuilding Fund	<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>JWP</b>	Joint Work Plan	<b>PCU</b>	Port Control Unit	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex	<b>PDNA</b>	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment	<b>UNDRR</b>	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>LGU</b>	Local Government Unit	<b>PHC</b>	Primary Health Care	<b>UNDSS</b>	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
<b>LNB</b>	Leave No One Behind	<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment	<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation	<b>PMO</b>	Prime Minister's Office	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>MISP</b>	Minimum Initial Service Package	<b>PoCSD</b>	Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>MoESY</b>	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth	<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>MoFE</b>	Ministry of Finance and Economy	<b>PWD</b>	People with Disability	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>MoHSP</b>	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	<b>R&amp;E</b>	Roma and Egyptian	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>Moj</b>	Ministry of Justice	<b>REVALB</b>	Recording Violence in Albania	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding	<b>RSD</b>	Refugee Status Determination	<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament	<b>RSH</b>	Reproductive and Sexual Health	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>MSA</b>	Market Systems Analysis	<b>RYCO</b>	Regional Youth Cooperation Office	<b>UN OMT</b>	UN Operations Management Team
<b>MTBP</b>	Mid-Term Budget Programme	<b>SAA</b>	Standard Administrative Arrangement	<b>UNRC</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator
<b>NAES</b>	National Agency for Employment and Skills	<b>SACRP</b>	State Agency on Child Rights and Protection	<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>NAPA</b>	National Agency for Protected Areas	<b>SALW</b>	Small Arms and Light Weapons	<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>NAPIRE</b>	National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians	<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Development Cooperation	<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>NAVETQ</b>	National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal	<b>USI</b>	Universal Salt Iodisation
<b>NCD</b>	Non-Communicable Disease	<b>SEESAC</b>	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons	<b>UTC</b>	Universal Treatment Curriculum
<b>NDC</b>	National Determined Contribution	<b>SERP</b>	Socio-Economic Recovery and Response Plan	<b>VAT</b>	Value Added Tax
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Employment, Education or Training	<b>SIIG</b>	Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group	<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>NESS</b>	National Employment and Skills Strategy	<b>SIPD</b>	Social Inclusion Policy Document	<b>VAWG</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation	<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure	<b>VCT</b>	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
<b>NHRI</b>	National Human Rights Institution	<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health	<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education Training
<b>NRCAS</b>	National Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers	<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	<b>WB</b>	Western Balkans
<b>NRM</b>	National Referral Mechanism	<b>SSS</b>	The State Social Services	<b>WB6</b>	Western Balkans Six (countries)
<b>NSDI</b>	National Strategy for Development and Integration	<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis	<b>WCO</b>	World Customs Organisation
<b>NSGE</b>	National Strategy on Gender Equality	<b>TIA</b>	Tirana International Airport	<b>WHC</b>	World Heritage Committee
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	<b>TiG</b>	Trust in Government	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	<b>TLAS</b>	Tirana Legal Aid Society		
<b>ONAC</b>	Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator	<b>UASC</b>	Unaccompanied and Separated Children		
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe	<b>UHC</b>	The Universal Health Coverage		
<b>OSSIS</b>	One-Stop-Shop Information System	<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom		
		<b>UN</b>	United Nations		