

2023



Albania Progress Report



UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA



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Foreword



GoA-UN Joint Executive Committee meeting - December 2023. Photo: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania.

We are pleased to present to you the 2023 Albania Progress Report on the second year of implementation of the Government of Albania (GoA)–United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026. The document details the work of 19 UN agencies with national and international partners, in support of Albania’s priorities to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focused on all four areas of our Cooperation Framework: human capital development (health, social protection and education); green growth, innovation and climate change; governance, rule of law and human rights; and achieving gender equality.

Globally, as the UN Secretary General stressed in his end-of-year message, 2023 was marked by conflicts erupting worldwide and with alarming frequency. As a member and occasional chair of the UN Security Council, Albanian diplomats have been central in the efforts of the Council to deliver the peace and security mandate of the UN and drive resolutions on peace and humanitarian response in increasingly constrained circumstances. The vigorous, quality work of the Permanent Mission of Albania to the UN and senior leaders in these efforts has been acknowledged widely. In 2024, as a newly elected member of the UN Human Rights Council, a strong contribution from the country to the multi-lateral peace and human rights mission of the UN is anticipated.

In Albania, 2023 was marked by progress in many areas with resilience demonstrated to external shocks. Bilateral screening was completed for Chapter 32 of the EU *acquis*, strong fiscal management and social protection measures were implemented in response to the damage and displacement caused by the 2019 earthquakes, excess deaths and movement restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic and economic pressures from the war in Ukraine.

This report presents the joint efforts of the UN agencies in Albania working alongside government in delivering measurable results: to build social protection to ensure no one is left behind; end violence

against women and children; strengthen local government; and promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainable business practices with the private sector in key areas of the economy. In-depth analysis on topical issues was undertaken to inform our work on *Resilience and Vulnerability: Effects of the Ukraine-Russia War on Albanian Agriculture and Rural Development*, and a country *Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management*. Sustained contributions were made in implementing normative commitments on human rights treaty body recommendations and several laws and strategies were reviewed from a gender equality (GE) perspective with GE also promoted through UN Country Team (UNCT) advocacy, echoed by other actors, and reflected in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Concluding Observations for the year.

Stocktaking and advocacy on progress on the SDGs was a priority for the UNCT throughout the year. At UN Week 2023, organised as an Albanian tradition dedicated to cultural cooperation, UN agencies showcased SDG achievements and celebrated their partnerships especially with local government, youth and the private sector. Jointly with government, progress was made along critical pathways such as Transforming Education, Food Systems, Global Accelerator for Jobs, Social Protection for Just Transition, Biodiversity and Nature, and Digital Transformation. Data and statistics, especially related to the Census, Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) and migration, alongside protection of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, were important focus areas of UN support to the country.

Success is a collective endeavour. We extend our deep appreciation to our staff and partners for their contributions, and look ahead to our collaboration in 2024 to continue driving positive change and progress in Albania.

We invite you to read our report and discover for yourself the progress we made in 2023!



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



Ms. Fiona McCluney
United Nations
Resident Coordinator

CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

1.1 Overall country and regional context in 2023

Albania has proven its resilience over the last couple of years. Despite challenges posed by the triple shock of the earthquakes of 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic and the start of the war in Ukraine, the country has continued to show remarkable economic resilience and commitment to European

High nominal economic progress was driven by resilient private consumption, notably with strength in construction activity and tourism, an increase also in the number of foreign visitors by 40 percent compared to the year before, and some 4.5 million foreign visitors exploring Albania's Protected Areas (PAs). However, income and wealth distribution continues to be a growing concern.

Union (EU)-oriented reforms, and delivered tangible and sustainable results. A low inflation rate of 4.9 percent in 2023 is well below regional comparisons, while relatively strong real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and forecasts at 3.6 percent and 3.8 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively, are also favourable.

Economic development gains were borne out in average salary increases, and large jumps in GDP per capita, from USD 6,260 in 2021 to USD 8,057 in 2023, a rise of 21 percent, are impressive. But less so when viewed in terms of real GDP per capita growth of 5.1 % in 2022 and 3.9 % in 2023. Government sought some redistribution impact from economic growth through legislated increases in minimum wages payable in all sectors, with the basic minimum wage increasing by 15 percent to 40,000 lek, and those for health and education staff by an average of 30 percent.

Monetary policy has been used well to support targeting of inflation and stable financial sector public finances held strong with higher than planned inflows and public debt remaining close to the target of 60 percent of GDP and decreasing, with plans to reach the target in 2024. However, high levels of informality in the labour market, youth unemployment, emigration, lack of structural transformation from lower to higher value-added economic activities, corruption and illicit financial flows and money laundering remain areas that will continue to require focus in 2024. Government is well positioned to address these challenges.

The 2023 Sustainable Development Report ranked Albania in the top one-third of countries globally (54th), jumping seven places. The National Strategy for Devel-

opment and European Integration (NSDEI) 2022–2030 was prepared in consultation with all stakeholders and launched at the start of 2023. It has the potential to strengthen the interface between the socio-economic and environmental targets and overall governance reforms.

Albania is a significant player in multilateral organisations. It is a member of NATO, was elected to the UN Security Council for 2022–2023, presiding in September 2023, has co-sponsored and co-led several crucial initiatives on Ukraine, and is on a path towards EU accession. In its latest conclusions, adopted in December 2023, the European Council welcomed the progress of reforms the country has made in the past year, including the successful completion of screening meetings. As the next step in Albania's accession process, the Council looks forward to opening the first negotiation cluster—covering chapters on judiciary, fundamental rights and justice—as soon as possible. The importance of Albania regionally is seen in the many high-level events it hosts: for the first time, and nine years after its launch in 2014, the Berlin Process Summit Meeting was held in Tirane on 16 October 2023.

ALBANIA AT A GLANCE

AREA: 28,748 KM²

MACROECONOMICS ¹	2021	2022	2023
NOMINAL GDP (\$BN)	17,984	19,083	23,032
REAL GDP GROWTH (%)	8.9	4.8	3.6
PER CAPITA GDP (CURRENT \$)	6,260	6,658	8,057
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)	11.4	11.1	11.0
INFLATION (%)	2.3	6.6	4.9
REVENUES (% GDP)	27.5	26.8	28.0
PUBLIC DEBT (% GDP)	75.2	65.5	61.1
DEMOGRAPHY AND HEALTH ²	2021	2022	
POPULATION (MILLION)	2.83	2.79	
AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO (% YOUNG)	24.1	24	
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH (% GDP)	3.36	2.98	
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, MALE	74.4	77.3	
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, FEMALE	78.7	80.9	
UNDER 5 MORTALITY RATE (DEATHS PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS)	9.2	7.6	
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ³	2021	2022	
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION (% GDP)	3.1	2.9	
GROSS GRADUATION RATE IN UPPER SECONDARY (%)	79.6	79.9	
NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE	10049	14839	
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET), MALE (%)	23.2	22.6	
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET), FEMALE (%)	29.1	27.8	
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (15-64), MALE	77.3	80.0	
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (15-64), FEMALE	61.4	66.7	
AT-RISK OF POVERTY RATE IN ALBANIA	22.2	22.0	
SELECTED GLOBAL RANKINGS	2021	2022	
RULE OF LAW INDEX RANK	83	87	
CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX RANK	110	101	
DEMOCRACY INDEX (TRANSITIONAL OR HYBRID REGIME)	46/100	46/100	
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX RANK	69	67	
SDG INDEX RANK	61	54	

1. IMF World Economic Outlook database: October 2023 and Article IV Consultations January 2024, UN DESA World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 from January 2024

2. IMF World Economic Outlook database, INSTAT Albania in Figures 2022, INSTAT various databases 2024, UNICEF

3. IMF World Economic Outlook database, INSTAT Albania in Figures 2022, INSTAT various databases 2024, UNICEF

1.2 Key partnerships and support to financing the 2030 Agenda

The achievements that are outlined below have been made possible only through the collaborative effort of the UN and its valued partners in Albania. This year we have seen our partnership with government strengthened on the SDGs and critical transition areas, and targeted efforts with academia, the private sector and young people continue to build momentum for change. Our work is possible through financial support from key development partners to core funding in country projects and contributions to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund in joint programme priorities.

In 2023, the 19 agencies of the UN in Albania implemented the second year of the UNSDCF 2022–2026 and collectively delivered USD 60 million, of which 96 percent was committed in-country.

The Government of Albania confirmed leadership and commitment to the SDGs by re-establishing the **Inter-Ministerial Committee and Working Group for SDG achievement and Agenda 2030**. The Development Finance Assessment (DFA) of the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) was drafted and presented to the Inter-Ministerial Committee. Building interest around sustainable finance in Albania continued with a High Level Event on **Financing Sustainable Development in Albania** and an **SDG-focused analysis of the 2023 draft public budget**.

The UN contributed to strengthening the **Parliamentary Sub-committee on Sustainable Development** through organising dedicated events, among these an onsite visit to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN agencies in Geneva. The visit served to raise awareness and capacities on the role that MPs can play in advancing

the 2030 Agenda, tools for SDG-related self-assessments, and advancing GE and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). These insights will serve to define the Sub-committee's annual workplan for 2024.

Government has also committed to preparing the **National SDG Roadmap 2024–2030** in 2024 to prioritise actions and measures to achieve the SDGs in accordance with the country's development priorities and progress in the EU Accession process.

Working closely with government, the UN continued to bring together a wide set of stakeholders in advancing work in key transition areas, as follows:

Education and Food System, where national commitments have been pledged and are being implemented **Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for**

Just Transition, where the UN strongly supported Albania in the process of becoming a pathfinder country resulting by end-year in the development of a Policy Mapping and National Roadmap

Biodiversity and Nature, where, among other initiatives under the Cooperation Framework, UN supported the 4th National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Digital Transformation, where UN is supporting implementation of Albania's digital agenda and corresponding action plan with focus on digitalisation of public services and ICT infrastructure, to name a few.

Special acknowledgement goes to the close collaboration with our development partners, whose contribution in support of our work is essential for implementation of UN activities in Albania. These resources are channelled through bilateral agreements with UN agen-

Inauguration of the restored façade Mosaic of the National Historical Museum under the EU4Culture programme, funded by the EU and implemented by UNOPS in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation. Photo: UNOPS in Albania



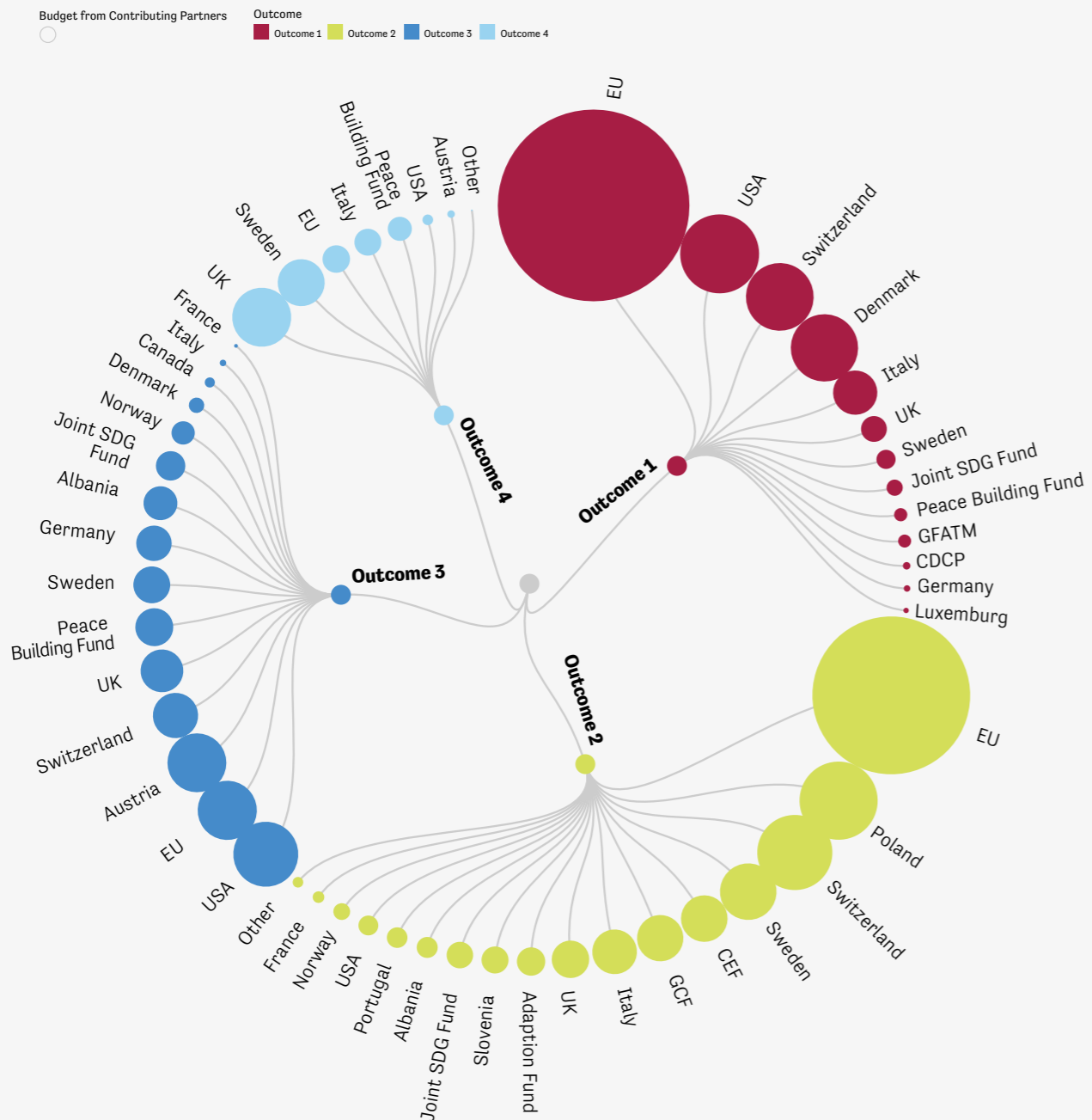
Resident UN Agencies



Non-Resident UN Agencies



2023 Contributing Partners



cies and through the SDG Acceleration Fund, which has proved important in increasing the strategic relevance and coherence of UN interventions in support of SDGs acceleration. The key contributing partners for UNSDCF 2022–2026 this year were the EU, Sweden, USA, Switzerland, Italy and others.

Partnering with academia in 2023 was pivotal in advancing the SDGs and fostering a holistic approach to address national challenges. Together, we raised awareness of sustainable development and the SDGs among students in Turgut Ozal High School, partnered with the Agricultural University of Tirana to enhance the financial literacy of farmers and agricultural extension service specialists, with Tirana University Faculty of History and

Philology to address issues of hate speech and divisive narratives, and with the universities of Tirane, Shkoder and Elbasan to customise continuing education programmes for practising social workers. In addition, we partnered with Epoka University to provide advocacy lectures on sustainable development and an SDG awareness survey with the entire tertiary education sector in Albania.

Private sector companies continued as trusted and valued actors and stakeholders for the UN in 2023, enabling several initiatives including promoting sustainability in business through the following:

- SDG Pioneers Award scheme, with 63 applications received and 15 prizes awarded



The UN Country Team receives the new EUD Ambassador to Albania Mr Silvio Gonzato and his team at the UN House. Photo: EUD in Albania

- Tackling discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ), people through the UN Free & Equal campaign, engaging around 150 businesses
- Promoting more family-friendly, gender-responsive and non-discriminatory work environments, engaging nine private companies.

Efforts continued to promote the UN Global Compact and the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEP) through awareness raising and workshops. Private sector engagement grew in 2023 with 17 new companies signing WEPs, committing to principles promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) in the workplace, bringing the total number to 54. Notably, 13 WEPs companies contributed to the first-ever Women Entrepreneurship Expo in Albania, bringing together the private sector and women entrepreneurs to facilitate exchange and networking. During the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-based Violence, 38 companies amplified the key messages of the campaign, including through video and radio, using campaign visuals on ATM screens, airing messages on LED screens and on posters, and during high visibility opportunities such as the football match between Tirane and Partizani. Sustainable development and the importance of mainstreaming SDGs was also presented and discussed with the Albanian Association of Banks.

Youth are critical stakeholders in sustainable development and many activities were implemented for UNSDCF outcomes and outputs addressing global and national issues. For example, jointly with the Ministry of Tourism

and Environment (MoTE), the Embassy of Spain, whose country held the Presidency of the European Council in the second half of 2023, the University of Tirana and the Polytechnic University we discussed with students climate change and the importance of collective action. Furthermore, supported by the UN, 254 young people contributed to a [#YouthManifesto](#) for action against climate change in Albania, calling for immediate government interventions to protect the environment and improve air quality.

In the context of the regional peacebuilding project ‘Strengthening the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative, respect for diversity, and trust’, young people from all over Albania gathered to take part in an innovation bootcamp, showcasing creative ways to combat hate speech and boost youth participation in electoral processes, particularly for the 2023 local elections. Furthermore, jointly with UN Association of Albania and UN Association of Sweden, a youth mock session was organised of #COP28 in Albania for the dialogue to help bring more informed voices to COP28 through the two youth representatives present in Dubai as part of the official delegation.

Continuing to mainstream the Leave-No-One Behind (LNB) principle in all of the UN’s work in Albania, the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) met with disability inclusion organisations and activists to discuss ways to enhance the impact of UN documents and programming for persons with disabilities (PwD) in the context of accelerating achievement of the SDGs.

CHAPTER 2

SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

2.1. Delivering results for Albania

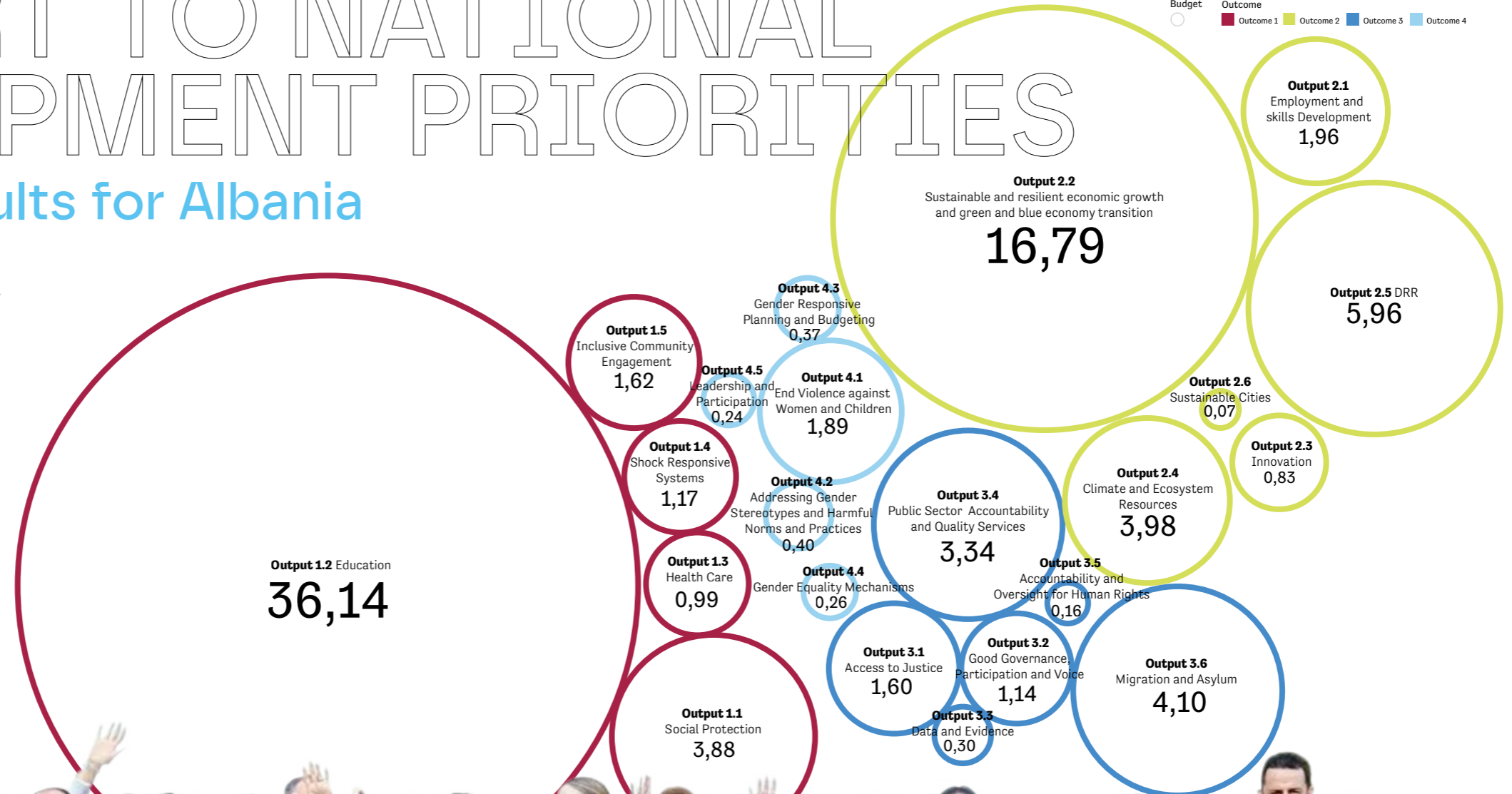
Continuing along the path of ‘Delivering as One’, the 19 UN agencies in Albania implemented in 2023 the second year of UNSDCF 2022–2026. Combining their expertise and experience, the initiatives implemented contributed to increasing investment in people and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion, accelerating green and blue growth and innovation, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation, and strengthening governance, rule of law, human rights and GE.

By end-2023, many results were evidenced at the central and local levels for each of the four Cooperation Framework Outcomes in support of the country’s development priorities and achievement of the SDGs. Reference is made to key SDG targets towards which these results contribute. Detailed information on the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund and associated joint programmes’ results for 2023 is reported in Annex A, while reporting on the indicators (Outcome and Output level) of the UNSDCF Results Framework is reported in Annex B.

UN staff in Albania says #NoExcuse for Gender Based Violence at the launch of 16Days of Activism Campaign 2023. Photo: UNDP Albania

2023 Budget (MILLIONS USD)

Budget Outcome Outcome 1 Outcome 2 Outcome 3 Outcome 4



OUTCOME 1

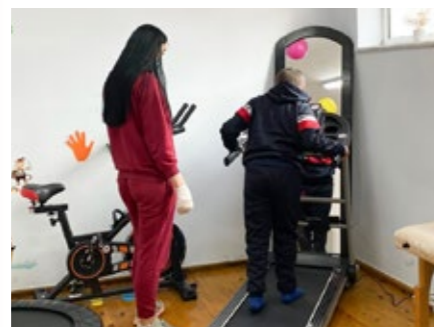
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



By 2026 there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion.

Child with intellectual disabilities during a developmental therapy session at the Lushnja Development Center, which was set up with the support of the UNDP / "Leave no one behind" programme. Photo: UNDP Albania



A LONG JOURNEY BEGINS WITH THE FIRST STEPS

Klevis is a child with disability receiving services at Korca's Community Centre for Children with Disabilities. Currently, the centre serves 30 girls and boys diagnosed with intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities. A team of five professionals assess the children's support needs, establish individual

development plans, and offer individual and group therapy. The centre was established in March 2021 with the support of the UN Joint Programme 'Leave No One Behind' implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women. With the unwavering support and long-standing commitment of the Swiss Agency for Development

Cooperation the project is working to boost opportunities for vulnerable communities to access social care services wherever they are based in the country.

[READ MORE](#)

OUTPUT 1.1

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

SDG TARGETS: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 10.2, 10.7, 11.10, 16.6



Providing services to children with disabilities in Durres. Photo: UNDP Albania

In 2023, the UN provided key support to advance an inclusive social protection system. Social policies focused on the well-being of vulnerable populations were at the core of interventions. At the central level, a new National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 and a Social Inclusion Policy Document 2023–2027 were prepared. Social care services across the country were mapped as a baseline for evidence-based policy making. A digital map was established in order to improve accessibility and transparency. With UN support, the regulatory framework for the Social Fund was improved, Law 22/2018 on Social Housing was amended and two

new by-laws enacted. A comprehensive assessment of cash assistance programmes was conducted to inform policy decisions, maximise cost-effectiveness and address equity concerns. The UN supported the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) to advance the de-institutionalisation process and approve a plan for transformation of Residential Care Institutions (RCIs) to family-based community centres in two pilot municipalities. Support extended to initiatives to improve academic research at social science faculties, refine internship programmes, update curricula for social work students and empower teaching assistants to better support students with disabilities.

At the local level, the UN supported municipalities and social service providers to improve social planning and implement policy reforms, as follows:

- **15 municipalities** (Belsh, Berat, Bulqize, Devoll, Diber, Dimal, Divjake, Korce, Kucove, Maliq, Patos, Permet, Pogradec, Roskovec, Tropoje) **updated and costed their local social care plans**, emphasising incorporation of a gender perspective, and an innovative social service delivery was established.
- **8 municipalities** enhanced their understanding of gender-responsive social services.
- **2 municipalities** (Gramsh and Gjirokaster) developed youth GRB.
- **15 municipalities** (Belsh, Berat, Delvine, Devoll, Diber, Gjirokaster, Korce, Kukes, Librazhd, Patos, Pogradec, Roskovec, Shkoder, Tepelene, Vau i Dejes) **received grants to set up and maintain new social services**, benefiting some 5,600 people, including Roma and Egyptian (R&E) community members, children with disabilities and vulnerable families.
- In 5 municipalities (Delvine, Dropull, Fushe-Arrez, Gjirokaster, Vau i Dejes), **700 women and girls raised several issues during participatory budgeting sessions**, of which 60 percent were addressed effectively and incorporated into the local budgets.
- The PRIZMA network (32 participants, 23 organisations) **strengthened advocacy capabilities for GRB** and social service delivery monitoring.
- In 61 municipalities, **100 staff were capacitated in social housing implementation** and policy reforms and 278 local staff of social services in the Integrated Social Service Model and service provision for PwD and to 16 community centres, benefiting 400 children and youth with disabilities.
- In 12 regions, **585 doctors, social workers and social administrators strengthened their capacities** to implement the new national disability reform.
- In Tirane and Durres, **Child and Family Support Hubs were introduced**, providing direct assistance to 40 children and their families at risk of institutionalisation.
- In 4 municipalities **the community-based health and care model was scaled up**, reaching 589 people from vulnerable and marginalised groups on accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services.
- In 1 municipality, a **crucial step towards provision of comprehensive care for the elderly** was the establishment of a Long-Term Care database with potential replication at the national level, promoted in a National Conference with participation of representatives from all municipalities.
- In 4 municipalities, **integrated social services were provided to 5,360 persons, with a focus on the R&E population**. Targeted initiatives capacitated 210 education professionals on inclusive education, benefiting 12,000 vulnerable children.
- In 5 municipalities, the **Universal Progressive Home Visiting methodology was applied**, with 13,214 visits conducted for 3,303 at-risk children.
- In 2 municipalities, focus was extended to **improved inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers through the #WithRefugees campaign**, and facilitation of ID issuance compatible with e-Albania for 16 persons with international protection, while rehabilitation of 37 returnees was supported and institution representatives capacitated in victim protection.

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SOCIAL CARE SERVICESMAPPING OF SOCIAL
SERVICES IN ALBANIA

Strengthened partnerships with organisations providing on-the-ground services produced significant results by empowering 8,425 disadvantaged children, youth, PwD and R&E communities to demand and access services and increase their participation in decision-making processes, as well as 30 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in their advocacy and service provision roles.

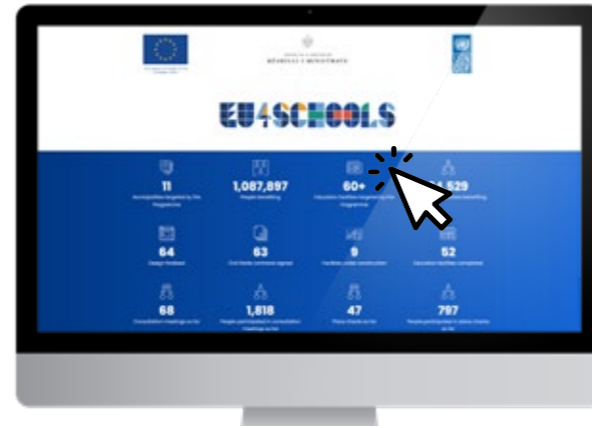
OUTPUT 1.2**Education institutions have improved policy, digital knowledge, tools and budgets to offer inclusive learning and 21st century skills**

SDG TARGETS: 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7

UN in Albania made substantial contributions to evidence-based policy analysis and advocacy in the education sector. Jointly with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) progress was monitored on the commitments made by government at the Transforming Education Summit, particularly in the areas of recovery from Covid-19 disruption, digital education and sustainable public financing. Through a co-creation process, a Memorandum of Collaboration was developed involving four ministries (Education, Health, Interior, and Finance) aiming to identify and provide support towards school success for adolescents of age up to 18 years who have not completed upper secondary education. GIS mapping of 100 schools in six municipalities was developed to be followed by capacity building and support to develop quality reconstruction infrastructure projects. MoES was supported for the development of protocols for psycho-social staff and for capacitating the whole psycho-social and safety workforce (750 psycho-social staff, 220 security officers).

Digital eco-system A total of 1,070 teachers and school network leaders was capacitated on blended learning pedagogy, while the learning digital ecosystem was supported through the online learning platform **Akademi.al**, which in 2023 reached 524,783 students and offered 29,741 interactive video lessons. A total of 17 Smartlabs were provided in upper secondary schools in close partnership with MoES that will be followed by capacity building programmes for the school staff.

Pre-school education Leveraging the EU accession process, the UN in 2023 helped secure harmonisation with the EU advanced equity-focused standards related to pre-school education. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Early Childhood Education (ECE), based on EU standards, was finalised and presented as part of the screening process (Chapter 26). The key studies 'Knowledge, Attitude and Practices', 'Financing for ECE' and 'Barriers to Accessing ECE' were completed to inform evidence-based advo-

**EU4SCHOOLS PROGRAMME****A transparency portal shows real-time information on the implementation of all targeted education facilities**

cacy efforts. In close partnership with MoES, *Ajencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (ASCAP*, Agency of Quality Assurance in Pre University) and municipalities, pre-school education was enhanced by capacitating more than 275 teachers (all female) in implementing ECE curricula in five regions, and more than 250 teachers (all female) in 150 kindergartens.

Primary and secondary education Significant achievements were made with improving school practices and resilience, including the following:

- Repairs to 16 education facilities in 2023 through the programme EU4Schools, providing better services to 5,713 pupils and students, 364 teachers and 463,403 members of the communities, and a training needs assessment in information technology and digital literacy, with the participation of 785 teachers from 43 education facilities, visualised in real-time through the transparency portal eu4schoolsportal.al.



Thanks to the partnership with the European Union, UNDP in the context of the #EU4Schools project is reconstructing or repairing 63 educational facilities. Photo: UNDP Albania

- Bolstering efforts for student achievements, secondary data analysis of Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) reports were conducted in collaboration with the National Centre for Education Quality including the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices study on dropout rates in upper secondary schools.
 - Introduction of an Early Warning System for dropout prevention in 100 (15 Vocational Education and Training, VET; 85 upper secondary) schools benefited 911 school staff through capacity-building in the warning system, dropout prevention and socio-emotional learning.
 - Comprehensive comparative review of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) strategies and policies cultivated a valuable knowledge base in education to inform future decision making. Albania also took part in an ongoing policy discourse in promoting STEM education, while a recently introduced optional subject on workplace dispute prevention was selected by some 6,000 high school students.
 - ASCAP teacher training capacities enhanced on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).
- VET** Improvements were evidenced in attendance and retention rates among 1,774 (443 girls) low achiever 15–18-year-old students in VET schools, while 1,278 students in VET schools were reached positively impacting their school attendance, retention, interactions with staff and other students and improving their socio-emotional skills. Meanwhile, advocacy efforts were directed at improving pre-university law, aligning it with the recommendations of the Committee monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), aiming to ensure inclusive settings in all schools and transform special schools into resource centres.
- Non-formal learning** UN provided opportunities to 500 Afghan 6–18-year-olds in Shengjin, equipping them with digital, language, maths and life skills. Meanwhile, 2,000 vulnerable children were supported in learning English, 200 teachers and assistant teachers from five municipalities were trained in inclusive education and, in close partnership with ASCAP, 345 teachers in how to integrate refugees and migrant children in Albania.

OUTPUT 1.3 **OUTPUT 1.4**

Health Care and Shock Responsive Systems

SDG TARGETS: 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.7, 3.8

In 2023 the UN supported the Albanian government in preparing policies and action plans (APs), stakeholder engagement, research and awareness campaigns around critical issues of Universal Health Coverage, improving the social, economic and environmental determinants of health and resilience-building in preparing for and responding to emergencies and pandemics.

Health APs and policies Health APs and policies were developed and endorsed for the following:

- Mental Health AP, 2023–2026.
- National AP on Drugs Prevention, Treatment

and Harm Reduction, 2023–2026.

- National AP on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), 2023–2030.
- Operationalisation of the Roadmap for Quality of Care and Patient Safety.

Collaborative policy dialogue Newborn, child and adolescent health, SRH, mental health, prevention of overweight and obesity, healthy aging, the One Health mechanism addressing antimicrobial resistance, immunisation and network-based Primary Healthcare (PHC) model, including home visiting and local community action.

The first Health Congress in Albania. Photo: UNICEF Albania



Evidence for health policy advocacy and action

- Childhood Obesity Surveillance Study (3,159 8–9-year-old children).
- Secondary analysis of database of health behaviour of school-age children (5,454 children, age 11, 13 and 15 years).
- Covid-19 vaccine effectiveness study (1,363 healthcare workers).
- Enhanced Covid-19 and Influenza Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) surveillance to estimate vaccine effectiveness (3,899 patients).

Community engagement for health literacy and inclusion

- SRH advocacy.
- Youth involvement in supporting the elderly in vulnerable settings (40,000 persons).
- Noncommunicable diseases primary and secondary prevention with focus on diabetes screening (1,400 persons).
- 12,172 home visits (for 3,883 <5-year-olds), contributing to strengthening PHC while putting children and families at the centre of ser-

UN Association in Albania, supported by UNICEF and WHO in a Joint Programme for mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. Photo: UNICEF Albania



vices and focusing on the most vulnerable.

- 257 health personnel from 7 target regions, skilled in child growth and development monitoring, vision and hearing screening, supporting parental skills and well-being, gender norms, child protection against discrimination and stigma.

Newborn care

- Targeted improvements to the regulatory frameworks and supervised support to enforce care standards in 9 maternity hospitals.
- 10 standard treatment protocols created for doctors and nurses in newborn care, engaging some 150 health professionals, in addition to nationwide capacity development

Health and nutrition

- 500 education professionals, school management, teachers and health personnel in Tirane and Elbasan informed in how to enforce healthy nutrition at school and >486 school-age children and 138 parents in 10 schools participated in activities promoting healthy nutrition. School-specific APs for non-obesogenic environments were developed for 10 schools.
- Physical activities for children in the framework of the **NowWeMove** campaign organised for some 200 children, 30 children with disabilities.
- Nutrition interventions promoted and regulatory framework for food standards and marketing of unhealthy foods in school settings were strengthened to address overweight and obesity in middle childhood.

Mental health

- Establishment of the National Multi-sectoral Sub-committee on Mental Health and Psycho-social Well-being and Development of Children and Adolescents within the National Mental Health Committee and development of 4 regional APs integrating mental health and psycho-social well-being.



Albana from Fier was diagnosed with and survived cervical cancer. Photo: UNFPA Albania.

- Guidelines for mental health and psycho-social well-being along the care pathway revised or developed, followed by capacity-building sessions (316 participants) in three regions. Health professionals in Lezhe and Elbasan supported with capacity development, instruments and tools to address postpartum depression.
- Mental Health Anti-Stigma Youth Campaign reaching more than 3,000 young individuals; 98 young people empowered to discuss mental health and well-being and engaged in action leading community initiatives in 5 municipalities.

Support to vulnerable groups in addressing critical health challenges

- National workshop held with 5 municipalities and CSO representatives on feasible approaches for direct financing of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to support vulnerable groups.
- Health authorities and services with special focus on mothers, children and adolescents provided for some 1,600 Afghans (781 children & adolescents) in Shengjin, with 113 health professionals capacitated in Lezhe; 74 children (35 girls) received immunisation services and 678 community members participated in

health promotion activities.

- HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre established in Berat male prison.
- 4 focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted (50 participants from communities of men who have sex with men and transgender, people who use intravenous drugs, female sex workers, people living with HIV) on improving access to HIV self-testing and pre-exposure prophylaxis; 93 healthcare workers trained in promoting and prescribing HIV self-testing and pre-exposure prophylaxis.
- Trained health personnel conducted 12,172 home visits, reaching 3,883 <5 year-olds (1,814 female, 586 R&E) using standard guidelines and tools.

Emergency preparedness and planning

- All-Hazard Emergency Operation Plan of Mother Tereza University Hospital Centre revised, including the Radiological Emergency Contingency Plan, with capacity building for 125 technical and managerial personnel from 34 services
- Durrës Regional Hospital and Shkoder Emergency Operational Plans followed up
- Capacity building of 125 participants in assessment of biosecurity risks in district & regional Public Health Laboratories, emerging

and re-emerging pathogens with One Health approach, zoonotic disease management and planning for health security.

- 2 tabletop exercises on Emergency Operation Plan simulating scenarios of flash flood and epidemic outbreak with actors from health institutions and emergency management entities.

Immunisation

- National Immunization Programme supported with capacity building of around 298 health professionals, education and local government professionals in cold chain management, safe storage of vaccines, introduction of new vaccines, microplanning for childhood vaccinations and multisectoral approaches to increase immunization demand
- Equipment procured for 80 vaccination units
- 2,418 home visits in 7 selected areas undertaken through community engagement of youth in support of people in vulnerable settings to support safe administration of vaccines; personal protective equipment to health authorities delivered
- Puppet show Mr Stethoscope took centre stage, aiming to bolster community acceptance of vaccines and combat misinformation. Tailored for children, the show used puppetry to convey the messages, with some 1,000 children participating.

Covid-19 control and post-Covid-19 management

- Guidelines developed and training in post-Covid management held for 178 PHC professionals, 208 hospital care professionals and 97 psycho-social staff
- National Immunization Technical Advisory Group technically supported in preparing 14 context-specific recommendations on Covid-19
- Comprehensive studies on effectiveness of Covid-19 and Influenza vaccines for healthcare workers conducted with rapid qualitative research (126 workers) on interventions for successful vaccination uptake
- Covid-19 vaccination and use of personal protective equipment promoted and facilitated through engagement of youth in support of fragile people in vulnerable settings, with 2,418 home visits in 7 selected areas.

OUTPUT 1.5

Inclusive Community Engagement

SDG TARGETS: 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 5.1, 5.5, 10.2



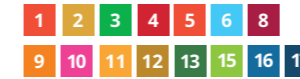
Lira Cela is one of the returnees who received support from The Reintegration of Returnees in the Western Balkans project. Photo: UNDP Albania.

With a focus on socio-economic integration of returnees, local action plans were developed with the municipalities of Berat, Devoll and Fier to enhance multi-agency service provision and case management protocols. More than 500 individuals received personalised support, with a focus on education, skills and digital expertise, improving employability in the formal labour market, and 32 returnees were empowered with entrepreneurial potential, fostering establishment of their business, and contributing to economic self-sufficiency. More than 250 returnees were supported with improved access to social and administrative services, while community cohesion programmes, supported by 15 small grants for local NGOs, reached more than 850 returnees.

In the context of earthquake recovery efforts, the UN developed a Livelihood Support Scheme benefiting more than 200 earthquake-affected households. Collaborating with 14 CSOs, more than 1,500 households received psycho-social support, tailored services and referrals, along with assistance in documentation preparation. Some 15 volunteering and self-help initiatives, implemented by partnering NGOs, contributed to community resilience and earthquake recovery. Three online platforms were facilitated, supporting volunteerism, addressing concerns with municipal authorities, coordinating resources and exchanging information on employment and training opportunities among young people.



Alignment with SDGs



Alignment with National Development Goals



Alignment with EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas



OUTCOME 2

ECONOMIC GROWTH, INNOVATION, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



By 2026 innovative and integrated policy solutions accelerate sustainable, productive and inclusive economic development, enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation and transition to a green and blue economy.

Photo credit: Depositphotos



ADOPTING ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY BEHAVIOURS

The voices of young people are crucial in shaping policies, driving innovation and fostering sustainable practices. As part of the YouthMove4Air&Climate2 initiative, more than 250 young leaders who are passionate about environmental stewardship are raising

awareness of air quality information and watchdog skills in nine municipalities: Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Kurbin, Pogradec, Shkoder and Tirane. The aim is to work with these municipalities to take proactive measures and educate their communities on the significance of clean air and the long-term benefits it offers. The initiative is

implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Albanian government line ministry and local partners and is supported generously by the Swedish government.

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OUTPUT 2.1

Employment and Skills Development

SDG TARGETS: 4.3, 4.5, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8

UN support to employment and skills reform in 2023 helped to strengthen the strategic, policy and legal framework, capacities for implementation, and employment, skills and integration of vulnerable groups. **National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2023–2030** was adopted and **amendments to the Law on Employment Promotion** enacted, specifically addressing inclusive employment for PwD through the Social Employment Fund.

The UN played a key role in supporting the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) and national institutions in preparing bilateral screening meetings on EU *acquis* chapters, including ‘Freedom of Movement of Workers’ (Chapter 2), ‘Social and Employment Policy’ (Chapter 19) and, partially, on ‘Education and Culture’ (Chapter 26).

VET Efforts were directed towards enhancing planning, monitoring and evaluation in the employment and VET sector, including the following:

- Monitoring of NESS 2019–2022 and **evaluation of Active Labour Market Policy** implementation for improved efficiency.
- Initiation of the VET accreditation process** and accreditation of the first 6 VET providers (5 public and 1 private) with 4 more embarking on the accreditation journey in 2023.
- VET providers in 3 regions** were supported in better management of VET offer.
- A network of professionals** supporting the Employment Agency and VET system was established strengthening the connection between VET education and the private sector.
- Employment opportunities for young people** were improved through a coordinated initiative between MoFE and the Employment Agency, connecting 600 young individuals with professionals in ICT, agriculture, tourism and hospitality through a network involving 22 companies <https://afpro.al/>.
- 4 career centres were established**, and capac-

ity-building programmes in schools provided career orientation for more than 2,000 young people through activities including online tests, local fairs and career guidance sessions.

Youth skills building More than 40,000 youth were supported through skills-building programmes, including the following:

- 239 youth from municipalities** with councils nominated in monitoring mechanisms and engaged in implementation of the Youth Strategy. Dedicated sessions regarding strategy monitoring were organised and monitored directly also through UNICEF’s U-Report.⁴
- Direct support to 7,388 young individuals** to identify community problems, solutions, roles of stakeholders, strategic planning and budgeting of concrete initiatives, with 16 youth-designed solutions funded addressing their specific community problems, and development facilitated of soft skills in communication and public speaking for 10,848 youth.
- 21,609 students had improved school attendance**, retention, socio-emotional skills and ICT proficiency, while their soft skills were built for group work and support, communication skills, critical thinking and leadership.
- Awareness raising initiatives and campaigns to improve employability** and participation of



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4. <https://westernbalkans.ureport.in/opinion/3468/>



140 young people from 59 Youth Municipal Councils are gathered to discuss and evaluate the measures and actions implemented up to date in the framework of the Youth Strategy 2023- 2029. Photo: UNICEF Albania

refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market, emphasising financial inclusion, reached nearly 10,000 adolescents and youth at risk.

Skills building and community organisation for women’s economic empowerment

- 285 women were supported in enhancing their skills** and accessing the labour market, especially in rural areas.
- 151 women entrepreneurs benefitted from the Regional Women Entrepreneurship EXPO 2023** capacity building and networking opportunities. A first ever EXPO satellite event was organized in Tirane involving around 40 women entrepreneurs and enhancing networking skills and access to potential business investors.
- Two artisan centres were established in Kruje and Kavaje** following a Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis 2021, targeting locations worst affected by the 2019 earthquakes, including the setting up of the local brand *Kruja Artizanale* and the artizanetekrujes.al website.
- Local Action Groups⁵ (LAGs) will be established in the municipalities of Elbasan and Kolonje**, following their registration in the Court of Ti-

rane, after an extended period of community consultations and capacity building activities. Women hold key management positions within the LAGs, enhancing the role of rural women in decision making and community development, as well as increasing their economic opportunities.

Dispute resolution and Occupational Health and Safety

- Internal rules and procedures for workplace dispute resolution were strengthened with UN support. MoFE and the newly formed Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) sector received technical assistance to assess the OSH Strategy 2015–2020 the findings from which guided the development of the new OSH Strategy 2024–2030, initiated in 2023.
- 20 bipartite monitoring groups were established** and capacity development initiatives on dispute prevention and grievance handling reached 350 professionals (65% women) and 20 companies.
- Awareness campaigns were conducted primarily in garment and footwear** companies following informative sessions with social partners.

5. LAGs are an EU approach to increase participation of rural communities in decision making for development of their respective areas.

OUTPUT 2.2

Sustainable and resilient economic growth and green and blue economy transition

SDG TARGETS: 5, 8.2, 8.3, 8.9, 9.1, 10.2, 10.4, 11.4, 12.4, 12.5, 15, 16.6, 17.7, 17.9

In response to the two shocks of the 2019 earthquakes and the Covid-19 pandemic, the UN in 2023 continued its contribution to sustainable development, economic resilience and empowerment across various sectors. The INFF drafting process and the funding of the DFA for Albania were presented to the Inter-ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development, marking a significant mile-

stone in the domestic ownership of the process. In addition, wider interest on sustainable finance was captured with the event **Financing Sustainable Development in Albania**. Building on DFA findings, UNDP initiated preparation of an SDG Investor Map for the country, complementing the array of instruments necessary for mobilising private sector resources and boosting SDG financing.

Multimedia dome projection in the Venetian Tower in Durrës, restored and transformed into the country's first Cultural Heritage Digital Interpretation center under the EU-funded EU4Culture programme, implemented by UNOPS in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation. Photo: UNOPS in Albania



Sustainable development through cultural heritage

- 9 cultural heritage sites in 6 earthquake-affected municipalities were restored, and specialised equipment provided. Cultural heritage management and business plans were completed for 6 sites in Durrës and other cities, strengthening sites management. A mobile ticketing system installed enabled one cultural site (Venetian Tower) to open the multimedia activities for the public (15,000 visitors during last 6 months of 2023).
- Ongoing works, detailed designs, and holistic approaches for 7 more sites show commitment to preserving the sites' authenticity, ensuring to build back better with enhanced resilience. Overall, restoration activities generated 23,127 labour days for local workers, of which 2,232 for women and 1,311 for young people.

Traditional Kavaja dance performance organized under the EU-funded EU4Culture programme, implemented by UNOPS in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation. Photo: UNOPS in Albania



Energizing Albania's Economy

UNDP's Supplier Development Methodology Transforms Businesses

As you journey through the picturesque landscape of Hamallaj, set on the stunning Adriatic coast, you'll likely spot a minivan covered in the words "Dini Fruits and Vegetables," which belongs to Dini, a mobile purveyor of fresh produce.

After a decade of hard work as a construction worker in Greece, punctuated by a harrowing car accident, Dini found himself at a crossroads in 2009. With resolve in his heart, he chose to return to his homeland, Albania. Guided by the unconditioned support of his brother and devoted wife, he embarked on a new chapter. Back on Albanian soil, Dini's aspirations took root. Together, they laid the foundation for a modest yet promising venture. Their vision? To forge connections between local hotels and restaurants and the bountiful earth of the region. Here, every fruit and vegetable bore the mark of relentless care and nurturing. In the embrace of this fertile land, Dini and his dedicated team nurtured not only crops but also relationships. The fruits of their labor told a story of resilience, as each piece of produce became an indication of their commitment.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Business Conference 2023, under the 'Business Partnerships and Solutions for the SDGs' Joint Programme. Photo: UNDP in Albania

- A grants scheme concluded 13 projects, contributing to socio-economic growth by creating job opportunities for 134 people (87 women, 83 youth), supporting through capacity building actions 2,238 beneficiaries (57% women). Also, 129 business sector entities were engaged in service provision for cultural tourism, 80 of which were small businesses supported to develop products inspired through cultural heritage.

Sustainable development with private sector

The UN continued to support and engage the private sector in addressing the SDGs, as follows:

- Comprehensive assessments were initiated in **agro-processing** (dairy, meat, fruits, vegetables, olive oil, cereal crops, flour, drinking water) and the **textile, clothing, leather and footwear** (TCLF) sectors.
- **Stocktaking reports on SDG principles and positive practices** adopted by both the agro-processing and TCLF sectors, as well as Zero Draft Roadmaps for SDGs and EU Green Agenda adoption for both sectors, were finalised and published.
- Consultations engaged more than 50 companies and stakeholders for fostering sustainability.



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- **The Business #2030 Conference was organised**, empowering Albanian companies with sustainable practices and reaching 250+ participants. The **SDG Business Pioneers Award** received 63 applications from companies, 15 of which received prizes at an award ceremony.
- The SCORE Basics Training module **enhanced working environments for 15 SMEs** in the TCLF sector (20% female owned), employing 2,498 workers (98% female), activating OSH committees and improving risk analysis.

- RECP methodology reports and APs proved impactful for 6 companies, with a total of **1,530 employees with potential annual savings** of more than EUR 100,000 per company.
- Demonstration assessments and **study tours to Sweden and Tunisia** furthered best practices.
- **49 businesses in Lezhe and Durres were supported** through In Motion methodology, and Growing with Your Business supported 8 others in Berat.
- UN engagement in the Albanian **wood sector** facilitated knowledge sharing and skills analysis, contributing to economic competitiveness.
- Under the Global Quality and Standards Programme, compliance challenges were identified and APs prepared, bolstering Quality Infrastructure institutions.
- Two **agriculture produce incubators** in Elbasan and Kolonje municipalities are ongoing and expected to be finalised in April 2024.

Women empowerment principles and global compact

Seventeen new companies signed WEPs, committing to abide by and follow the set of principles promoting GEWE in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Mine closure, geothermal resources and e-Waste

- Albania's readiness for a **green and just transition in local post-coal mining areas was assessed and barriers examined**. An inception workshop launched the self-assessment exercise of the Equitable Access Scorecard, and stakeholders were actively engaged in identifying challenges and priorities.
- Guidelines for mine closure and assessment of the country's geothermal resources and potential for development of geothermal energy were presented to government at a workshop.
- **The Regionale-Waste Monitor for the Western Balkans Report was launched** in 2023 aiming to collect internationally comparable e-Waste statistics.

OUTPUT 2.3

Innovation

SDG TARGETS: 2.3, 2.4, 4.7, 5.5, 8.3, 11.4, 12.b



Firdeus, UPSHIFT alumni at the UPLIFT start-up accelerator supported by UNICEF. Photo: UNICEF Albania

Innovation is central to sustainable development and a catalyst for economic growth. UN support for innovation spans country interventions including women's empowerment, education, child health promotion and youth entrepreneurship. The following notable actions took place:

- A new Digital Innovation Profile for Albania is being developed, to be launched in Q2 2024.
- Support for the platform **Akademi.al** has enriched the learning experience for pre-schoolers, while the innovative career platform, to be developed jointly with the *Agjencia Kombëtare e Punësimit dhe Aftësive* (National Employment and Skills Agency) platform, focuses on equipping young people with essential communication and job application skills. The GIS platform for school infrastructure, covering 6 municipalities, enhanced transparency in identifying schools for reconstruction.
- Youth entrepreneurship found support through the UPLIFT Start-Up Accelerator.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) was supported in establishing a technical working group for the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) and developing software technical specifications through training and study visits.

OUTPUT 2.4

Climate and ecosystem resources

SDG TARGETS: 3.6, 4.1, 9.1, 11.b, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3

Protected Areas and nature conservation

Albania experienced a remarkable surge in tourism in 2023, with 10.1 million visitors welcomed, an increase of 35 percent over the previous year. Of these tourists, 4.5 million explored the country's PAs. Crucial UN support to these areas is provided to enhance governance mechanisms and bolster financial sustainability to effectively manage nature conservation and promote ecotourism.

Challenges to and opportunities for biodiversity conservation and resilience to climate change in the northern Albania mountains and national park were explored through meetings with key beneficiaries and stakeholders at the inception of a new global environment fund multi-year programme.

Under a collaborative Team Europe initiative, funded by the EU and Swedish government, and jointly implemented with the Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation, the PAs network will be strengthened and aligned with EU standards, particularly with Natura 2000. The development of new digital maps for all PAs in the 12 regions, utilising GIS technology, enables accurate depiction of changes in surface areas, and provides key tools for monitoring, managing and planning, resulting in a strengthened approach to the holistic management of these vital ecological zones.

A significant environmental achievement was marked with the declaration of **Vjosa River as a National Park**. This categorisation positions Vjosa River as the first Wild River National Park in Europe, a testament to collaborative efforts and multi-partner engagement.

Establishment of the legal basis and the National System of Inventory and Projections for Greenhouse Gas Emissions aligns with EU requirements. This achievement builds upon the UN-supported system of reporting developed over four National Communications (since 2002) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Solar energy

The application of solar energy in ten public institutions in four municipalities benefited 2,124 students and municipal staff. By-laws governing solar energy provision, coupled with a financing mechanism, will boost the market to see diversification of renewable energy sources beyond the large hydroelectric power stations.

Forestry

By-laws were developed for the forestry sector, with five national capacity development sessions on their implementation benefiting 61 municipalities, and five pilot interventions on the ground contributing to a sustainable and resilient forestry sector.

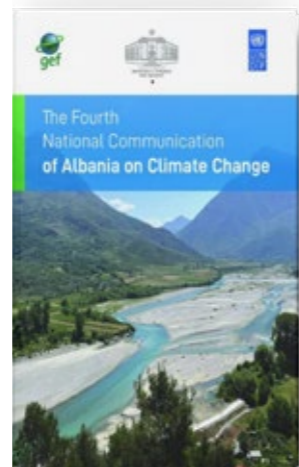
Water sector

Climate proofing for sustainable development will be the focus of a comprehensive knowledge and information base to be developed for the water sector. Analysis of national and regional needs in the sector was completed identifying needs, recommendations and priorities to address crucial aspects of water resource management.

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IN BLUE: MARINE AND COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS IN ALBANIA



THE FOURTH NATIONAL COMMUNICATION OF ALBANIA ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Sylbica Highlands in Tropoja. In partnership with GEF, UNDP supported 10 livestock farms with solar panel installation in their summer huts. Photo: UNDP Albania.

Climate change

Five multi-hazard climate risk and vulnerability assessments for five economic sectors and eight municipalities were conducted to assess risk. Eight municipalities are developing local climate adaptation plans, adopting a participatory hands-on approach. In November 2023, Albania became the 42nd country to sign the **Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action** with young people providing recommendations to MoTE also in the framework of COP28. New adapted curricula on Clean Air and Environment for the lower secondary education system were introduced in partnership with MoES and will create space for learning green skills and actions on climate and efficient management of ecosystem resources.

Pollution and recycling

UN supported young people in the development of **The Youth Manifesto**, which outlines key demands from youth affected by air pollution. A total of 279 youth were capacitated in air quality, positioning themselves as watchdogs for policy monitoring in nine municipalities. Recycling was the focus of a joint agreement between government and Tirane Municipality to provide schools with knowledge and skills and in partnership with MoTE and the municipality, more than 100 schools were supported with capacity building and resources for recycling in schools.

UNDP, together with the government of Japan, installed solar photovoltaic systems in 4 public institutions in Dibra, diversifying energy sources & helping combat climate change. Photo: UNDP Albania.



OUTPUT 2.5

Disaster Risk Reduction

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

The UN commitment to enhancing **Albania's Disaster Risk Management System yielded significant results.** Institutional structures, including civil protection committees, were established. New instruments, such as risk assessments, disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies and civil emergency plans, were introduced at national, regional and local levels. These advancements not only bolstered Albania's resilience but also paved its way for membership of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

In Fier region, preparation of **subnational DRR strategy and planning documents**, regionally and locally, directly benefits 298,144 people, including local communities and stakeholders. Lessons learned and best

practices are actively shared with the other 11 regions and 55 municipalities nationwide to promote scaling up and continuous improvement.

In collaboration with the UN, the Institute of Geosciences fortified the early warning system and strengthened capacities in data collection, processing, dissemination and digitalisation, resulting in an **extended and upgraded seismic monitoring network.** With a total of 20 seismic stations covering the entire territory, this enhancement facilitates improved planning, research and data exchange at local and regional levels.

Capacity **building activities for professional firefighters** were delivered, benefiting 377 firefighters

In the context of the RESEAL project, UNDP works to prepare Albania to cope with disasters. Photo: Agjencia Kombëtare e Mbrojtjes Civile



across 26 municipalities, contributing to a more prepared and skilled firefighting force. Additionally, the construction of new fire stations in Fier and Pogradec municipalities will improve the working conditions and operational capabilities of firefighters.

To contribute to a strengthened risk and disaster management system, in the framework of the design of the Social Protection Strategy, a strengthened **education and social protection system, resilient to disasters and supportive of preparedness** was incorporated. Additionally, in 2023, the UN conducted an assessment involving 100 schools of the physical conditions and the disaster preparedness level with the data included in a GIS system shared with MoES and the municipalities for accountability. On DRR Day, October 13 2023, the UN engaged youth advocates in a national digital campaign #BreaktheCycle raising their voice also on the consequences of growing disaster risk.

In the realm of **gender mainstreaming and Disaster Risk Management (DRM)**, a gender-responsive practical manual for strengthening resilience in local DRR was produced and distributed to all 61 municipalities in Albania. The effort not only increased knowledge of CSOs and municipalities but also fostered their connections with vulnerable groups.

Under various projects, including the EU4Culture and SHELTER EU initiatives, protocols of **disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery and prevention were established for the protection of Albania's cultural heritage.** This includes the development of DRM plans for cultural sites and museums in four municipalities, ensuring prolonged durability, longevity and resilience, in addition to capacity building for civil protection and cultural heritage experts in data-driven and community-based Operational Knowledge Framework.

Working jointly with the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for Southeast Europe, the Albanian National Civil Protection Agency, the European Commissions' Joint Research Centre and other international partners, an update of the **subnational INFORM Risk Index** for South-east Europe was released. This index identifies high-risk areas likely to require international assistance, considers hazards, exposure, vulnerability and coping capacity, and supports a proactive DRM framework.

OUTPUT 2.6

Sustainable cities

SDG TARGETS: 11.1, 11.7, 16.6, 16.7



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A country profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management was completed and approved at the 84th session of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, providing insights into Albania's urbanisation, housing and land management.

In the framework of the initiative Child Friendly Municipalities (*Bashki mike e femijeve*) in Korçe and Diber municipalities the following achievements were made:

- **Statistics on Children in Diber** were published, **153 adolescents (78 girls of age 10–17 years) voiced their concerns and 98 adolescents (45 girls) improved their skills in advocating for their rights** with the local authorities. One-third (30%) were from rural areas and one-fifth (20%) from families at risk of exclusion. This forum provided an opportunity for children, who are not usually heard, to present a wide range of interests and concerns to the municipalities.
- In Korçe, 6 local CSOs, very active as members of the inter-sectoral steering committee of the initiative, engaged 60 adolescents (40 girls) including those from rural areas and R&E communities.

OUTCOME 3

GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people (women and girls, men and boys, and persons at risk of exclusion), to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with Albania's human rights commitments.

One of the winning groups of the bootcamp for young innovators, under the regional project "Youth for Inclusion, Equality and Trust" supported by UNPBF and implemented by UNDP and UNFPA Albania.



EMPOWERING YOUTH AGAINST HATE SPEECH IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Fake news, misinformation and hate speech are causing significant harm to mental health, exacerbating social divisions and eroding trust in public institutions throughout the Western Balkans. Marginalised groups, particularly women and girls, are frequently targeted by

hate speech. Of particular concern is the role of social media, which has become a fertile breeding ground for disinformation. Under a WB regional initiative supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund four UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNESCO) are collaborating to empower young individuals to take a stand against hate

speech and cultivate a safer digital environment. The project is engaging a diverse range of youth, including students, journalists, decision makers, politicians, artists and activists.

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OUTPUT 3.1

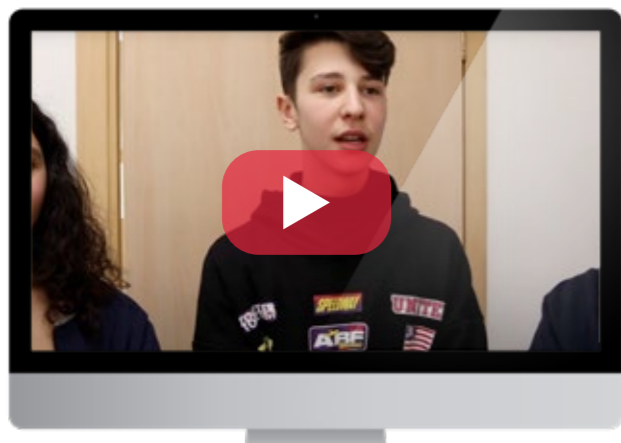
Access to Justice

SDG TARGETS: 5.2, 5.5, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 16.3, 16.9

The UN supported government in improving and implementing changes to the justice system normative framework. Development and adoption of the first Cross-Sectoral **Strategy** for Protection of Victims of Crime, the inclusion of GE and child rights in the draft new Criminal Code and the National Plan for EU Integration and Roadmap as part of Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) were major achievements. Another important result was the issuance of the statelessness determination procedure by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), fulfilling Albania's pledge at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and the renewal by government of the commitment to strengthen implementation of statelessness provisions in the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

Supported by the UN, government, training institutions and justice authorities invested in capacity building around several pieces of legislation and strategies, affecting equitable access to justice, including the following:

- **188 (64 Men) law enforcement, justice and care authorities were trained** in various aspects of the child's right, and equitable access, to justice. As a result, inter-sectoral referrals to the one-stop centres for victims of sexual violence in Fier and Shkoder increased exponentially. Use of child-friendly interview units doubled in 2023 compared to 2022. Inter-sectoral meetings for the case management of children



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in conflict or contact with the law took place, in contrast with the situation prior to UN interventions, while 16 leaders of Lezhe justice and care authorities signed an MoU to jointly manage these cases. Based on new data collection tools, reporting templates and instructions developed, the first results-based reports of the new Justice for Children Strategy 2022–2026 developed, represents a qualitative jump from the traditional, performance-based reporting of the previous J4C Strategy (2018–2021).

- **Capacities of 234 Bar Association members and attorneys were strengthened** with regard to constitutional rights, the Constitutional Court and individual constitutional claims, gender-based violence (GBV), disability and property rights, among others, to ensure delivery of tailored free legal aid services to vulnerable groups.
- **Tripartite Reconciliation Offices at MoFE and the 12 Regional Employment Offices were trained** and certified by the ILO International Training Centre in amicable labour dispute resolution and international labour standards. As a result, the system of such resolution of collective disputes was used to provide fast, professional and free mediation and reconciliation to the most vulnerable workers. Meanwhile, international labour standards became part of the School of Magistrates curricula for initial and in-service training programmes.
- **350 professionals were capacitated to improve service provision** for confirming the nationality of persons at risk of statelessness.

In 2023, the UN, in partnership with Free Legal Aid (FLA) Centres and CSOs, supported vulnerable girls, boys, women and men to obtain a range of services concerning their right to access justice and obtain remedies.

- **206 (92 Roma, foreign unaccompanied and separated, stateless, victims of sexual or other abuse) children in conflict or contact with the law, or at risk of trafficking and 43 parents obtained legal assistance, access to employment**



A public space in Shkoder used as a scene to run flash mobs, street theaters, paint exhibitions and mural art to call the attention of the community to support children's journey away from crime. Part of the 'Interdisciplinary collaboration on child-friendly justice' programme. Photo: UNICEF Albania

programmes, medical attention, social housing or shelter through support of the UN and its partners Tirana Legal Aid Society and Today for the Future. Some 84 parents (15 males) of children in conflict or contact with the law, including Afghanis, strengthened their skills through parenting programmes.

- **The number of FLA Centres was increased to 12 from 10**, providing assistance to 3,148 citizens (51% women), with an additional 4,289 (62% women) benefiting from CSO FLA services. Through collaboration with the Legal Aid Network, the legal aid needs of 200 children and their caregivers were covered, and 108 legal cases identified.
- **Of the 297 people at risk of statelessness assisted in 2023, 229 cases were resolved** through administrative and judicial procedures.

The UN supported demand for justice, particularly by investing in community information, awareness and engagement activities, reaching approximately 1,584 individuals across 36 municipalities, while 1,039 children (406 boys) and youth in three municipalities were engaged in awareness, artistic and community activities and demanded from authorities a friendlier and more accessible justice for children.

Young ARTivists rehearse for the social theater to raise public awareness on the community-based rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims and witnesses of crime and children in conflict with the law. Photo: UNICEF Albania



OUTPUT 3.2

Good governance, participation and voice

SDG TARGETS: 5.5, 10.2, 10.3, 16.7

In 2023, the UN continued its efforts to enhance the involvement of civil society and youth in decision making by establishing a supportive legal and financial framework.

Cash assistance services

Analysis was conducted to understand perceptions of cash assistance services and their impact on family dynamics, informing improvements to the social protection strategy. Approximately 10,000 families in Bulqize, Kamez, Kukes and Puke were reached with public awareness initiatives on the right to access social protection benefits. Capacity-building initiatives benefited 95 staff in selected municipalities, promoting an integrated approach linking cash assistance with services of employment, education, health and law enforcement, and addressing issues of illegal emigration, domestic violence and trafficking.

Challenges for young people at risk or not in employment, education or training (NEET)

The UN collaborated with the National Association of Social Workers to train 205 social services personnel in Durres, Elbasan, Kamez, Kruje and Tirane, focusing on building skills to address the needs and challenges of young people at risk or not in employment or education.



Click to view

Financing through CSOs

Assessment of existing financing mechanism and regulations for disbursement of public funds to CSOs at central and local levels was conducted and the capacity of seven municipalities increased to administer grant schemes. This resulted in six public calls and a successful implementation of 21 community initiatives from 145 youth across six municipalities.

Fighting hate speech, discrimination & bullying

503 young people actively participated in peer-to-peer

training, enhancing their knowledge and capacities. The UN also engaged 100 youth in innovation bootcamps and provided mentorship and financial support to 30 of them, contributing to a comprehensive approach to foster inclusivity and combat negative behaviour. Partnerships with the Faculty of Journalism and various CSOs facilitated engagement with diverse youth groups involved in journalism, sport, football supporters clubs and marginalised ethnic minorities, while the partnership with Maniacard led to a national awareness campaign called *Fjala Vret!*

Youth regional exchanges in Albania, with participants from Western Balkans (WB) countries, encouraged exploration of commonalities to combat hate speech based on ethnicity and nationality. Meanwhile, a partnership with the Minister of State for Youth and Children offered capacity-building opportunities on countering hate speech for representatives of local youth councils nationwide.



Regional West Balkans Basketball Tournament organized in the context of the regional project "Youth for Inclusion, Equality and Trust" supported by UNPBF and implemented by UNDP and UNFPA Albania.





"SDGs with a Focus on Data Literacy" conference in May 2023, convened by INSTAT with support of the Swiss Federal Statistics Office. Photo: UN Albania

OUTPUT 3.3

Data and evidence

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

In 2023, the UN addressed key challenges to the collection and analysis of statistical data through several initiatives supporting Albania, including the following:

Cultural development indicators suite

Results of the Culture for Development Indicators Suite for Albania were completed and presented, underlining key challenges and supporting long-term policy development.

Child-adolescent and youth-focused indicators

In the framework of the National Official Statistics Programme 2023–2026, INSTAT published more than 120 such indicators accompanied by an interactive visualisation dashboard. To enhance monitoring of the Agenda of Child Rights, the Child-focused indicators platform was restructured to fit with the improved regulatory framework, expanding the scope and number of indicators from 58 to 62. The released data were instrumental for MoHSP drafting a mid-term monitoring report for the National Agenda for Child Rights 2021–2026.

Engagement with human rights bodies

The UN supported government to submit to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child its replies to the list of issues on its combined 5th and 6th periodic reports, advocated for a multi-sectoral composition of

the delegation and capacitated line ministries in constructive dialogue engagement with the committee during the session.

Framework and roadmap for science research

Through partnership with the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation, a roadmap for the opening of EU Chapter 25 (Science and Research) was drafted, resulting in the agency financing five out of the 12 proposals for research involving vulnerable groups, compared to only two in 2022. Furthermore, the UN advocated for and contributed to the draft law on research to include measures in setting an ethical regulatory framework for the country.

Health behaviour in school-age children survey

This survey was completed and endorsed by both MoES and MoHSP and followed up with the development of 12 regional fact-sheets on in-depth data analysis on child abuse and adolescent maltreatment and capacity development workshops.

Demographic change and population

In aiming to fortify the legal framework on population, demographic change and resilience, a Parliamentary Group on Population was established in July 2023. This support was extended for the 2022 Census (postponed to 2023) and a data gap assessment for MICS in 2025.

OUTPUT 3.4

Public sector accountability and quality services

SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 5.2, 16.2, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.a, 17.1, 17.17

Improved access to public services and the quality and efficiency of their delivery to citizens and businesses was evidenced in 2023 through the active contribution of the UN in strengthening governance, digital capabilities and adherence to international standards.

The UN actively supported the EU accession processes through tailored expertise, knowledge and best practices in Cluster 5 (Resource, agriculture and cohesion) and Cluster 3 (Competitiveness & inclusive growth) including possible regional flagship events in the energy and climate space, as follows:

- 7 municipalities adopted meaningful annual consultation practices and 15 municipalities joined transparency and the knowledge sharing platform **Konsultimi Vendor**.
- Integrity plans were adopted by 23 municipalities and knowledge transferred to the Agency

for support to Local Self Government to expand and sustain this practice.

- UN supported the finalisation and publication of a new Decentralisation Strategy for 2023–2030.
- A comprehensive 2022 Annual Trust in Governance Opinion Poll was completed and launched.
- Support for ISO certification was provided to 5 central government institutions to improve standards.
- Public procurement system analysis was conducted, focusing on access to bidders, efficiency, transparency and challenges seeking enhancement of the system's effectiveness.
- Digital readiness assessment of Albanian municipalities and the public in general was developed and conducted in the field, to be furthered in 2024 and leading to a roadmap for efficiently tackling digital transformation at different levels and by different stakeholders.

Dissemination workshop: Good practice of Participatory Decision making at local level. Photo: UNDP



OUTPUT 3.5

Accountability and oversight for human rights

SDG TARGETS: 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.a, 16.b, 17.9

Advocacy and engagement with Parliament and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in 2023 centred on crucial issues that included child rights, GE, combating non-discriminatory violence against women (VAW) and addressing harmful practices. To enhance public oversight, capacities of monitoring mechanisms were strengthened, with specific focus on generating evidence on the situation of vulnerable groups such as irregular migrants, including the following:

- Friends of Children group of Members of Parliament was equipped with information and arguments on child rights that were effectively used during 4 oversight hearings and on improvement proposals to two bills.
- The newly established Parliamentary Institute was supported to conduct a legal comparative analysis on the digital rights of children.
- Parliament increased the budget for the National Ombudsperson (People's Advocate) during the mid-year budgetary review, a key advocacy point of the UN over the past few years.

The **Second National Action Plan** (NAP) for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was approved, following direct support and coordination with CSO partners and the international community. NAP reflects Albania's strong commitment to promoting a more gender-responsive legal and policy framework on peace and security, building on the lessons learned during implementation of the first NAP, its non-permanent membership to the UN Security Council for 2022–2023 and membership to the Human Rights Council. Through continuous efforts in this area over the last few years, Albania improved its ranking by 15 places in the **Women, Peace and Security global ranking** from 2017 to 2023.

UN supported preparation of the State thematic report to GREVIO, the independent expert body responsible for monitoring implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (**Istanbul Convention**) and updating of the CSO Shadow report to the CEDAW Committee and of its CSO Shadow report. UN also supported the preparatory sessions for members of the del-

egation and their engagement during the reporting session to the Committee. A gender-sensitive legal analysis of key legislation, including the Criminal, Family and Civil codes, was completed, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of gender-related legal frameworks and their alignment with international standards.

Children with disabilities and their families were empowered with information on how to access the remedies provided by the Ombudsperson through an illustrated brochure describing the most significant cases of children with disabilities handled by this NHRI in a child-friendly language. This effort contributed to increased transparency and trust, encouraging more children to come forward and use this complaint mechanism for violations of their rights. Some 100 boys and girls, teachers and parents in a secondary school were reached and increased their information on the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) and the remedies it can offer for violations of child rights, concepts of equality, non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion. The Anti-Discrimination Law materials developed for that event were used in an additional 14 open days activities of the Commissioner nationwide resulting in increased demand for remedies. Additionally, capacity-building interventions focused on empowering 24 young individuals to engage in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, including those with disabilities, LGBTIQ youth and ethnic minorities.

As a result of effective collaboration of the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and the UN agencies, the People's Advocate annual conference was organised to mark Human Rights Day and the end of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The conference was an opportunity to take stock of Albania's progress in ensuring the human rights of various vulnerable groups and disseminate the recently issued Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and CEDAW Committees concluding observations to Albania. Support in 2023 continued to the People's Advocate office for development of the Case Management System and on regularly monitoring of pre-screening procedures, living conditions in temporary accommodation and the closed centre for irregular migrants. Findings and recommendations were addressed to the General Directorate of Border and Migration Police.



People's Advocate annual conference to mark Human Rights Day 2023. Photo: UN Albania

OUTPUT 3.6

Migration and asylum

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

During 2023, support for migration policy and institutional capacities in managing mixed movements of refugees and migrants in Albania yielded significant results, contributing to a comprehensive approach in managing migration, ensuring protection and advocating for the rights of vulnerable individuals and families. MoI is developing the National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan 2024–2030, while a Migration Governance Indicators assessment and evaluation of the Global Compact on Migration were conducted to inform the new Strategy on Migration. The results of these actions include the following:

- 4,307⁶ individuals benefited from targeted interventions, with 282 granted access to territory and asylum.
- Jointly with the EU Asylum Agency and the Border and Migration police, 22 officials from the latter were capacitated in access to asylum procedures.
- Advocacy efforts led to improved capacity within the national asylum authority to consider applications for family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection and successfully promoted the improved legislation for the rights and protection of foreign unaccompanied children.

6. Data provided by UNHCR.

- Government made new pledges in the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, committing to decentralise asylum procedures and ensure the quality of those procedures.
- Establishment of a temporary facility in Qafe Bote, with a capacity of 60 beds, increased Albania's capacity to accommodate temporarily people identified among the mixed migration.
- A Training Manual for Child-Rights Based First Contact with Migrant Children for the Child Protection Units in Albania was developed and delivered to the Child Protection Agency, promoting a child-sensitive approach, emphasising child protection standards and aligning with international and regional commitments.
- UN continued to support Afghan children and families, ensuring access to child protection programmes and psycho-social support, benefiting 278 children (4–12 years of age) who received daily psycho-social support in child friendly spaces, while 172 adolescents benefited from Youth Friendly Space programmes, 83 parents participated in parenting classes and 155 women frequented a Women and Girls Safe Space.

OUTCOME 4

GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

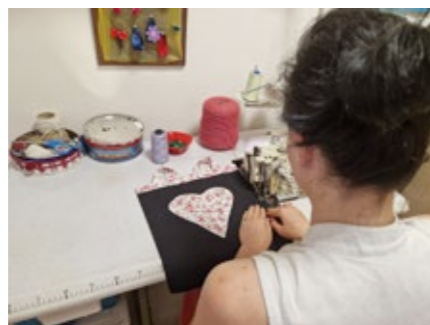


International Labour Organization



By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women's empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children.

Football clubs of Tirana and Partizani supported the 16 days campaign during their derby at Air Albania Stadium in Tirana. Photo: Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Albania



A STORY OF BUILDING BACK BETTER

Against the gentle hum of a sewing room, amid the rhythmic whir of machines, Rina finds more than just stitches and fabric. She is a survivor, a testament to resilience, who is attending a sewing course. Economic empowerment is pulsating, a lifeline extended to women and girls

navigating the aftermath of domestic and gender-based violence. For Rina, it has been a journey of transformation, from registering with the employment office to securing a full-time position in the same business where she honed her skills in an apprenticeship. It has been her guiding light. This is just one of the

interventions of the UN Joint Programme 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls in Albania', financed by the government of Sweden.

[READ MORE](#)

OUTPUT 4.1

End violence against women and children

SDG TARGETS: 4.4, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 11.6, 16.1, 16.2

In 2023, the UN advanced efforts to address and eliminate violence against women, girls and children (EVAWGC), offering support, protection and empowerment to those affected. Efforts led to a stronger institutional response to implement laws and policies addressing such violence and their better alignment with international standards and recommendations including the most recent (2023) CEDAW Concluding Observations. Fourteen partner CSOs actively contributed to development of shadow reports on implementation of the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW. UN supported

An improved institutional response to EVAWGC was put in place. Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) in all municipalities were strengthened, ensuring a more cohesive and effective approach. Thorough analysis of CRMs in 42 municipalities is being finalized, evaluating the effectiveness, challenges and recommendations. In 2023, 317 service providers (of which at least 264 women) in 24 municipalities⁷ increased their capacities to handle and refer cases of violence, including health service, teachers, police officers and local domestic violence coordinators. As a result, 426 people (10 men and 416 women survivors of violence), including at least 27 Roma and Egyptian women, 16 women with disabilities, and 123 women from rural areas received direct support. Amongst these beneficiaries, 226 received legal aid and 76 received psychological support. Preliminary data for 2023 provided by MoHSP show that 5,064 cases of violence were reported, 2,730 Protection Orders or Immediate Protection Orders were released and 1,911 cases were referred to the prosecutor. 621 cases of violence were addressed through the online registration and tracking system of GBV cases (REVALB). Through the MoUs signed between Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) and Pogradec and Vlore municipalities, the organisations are now participants in the municipal CRMs.

In 2023, the UN partnered with national and local actors to further strengthen local institutional response mechanisms. Resilience Centres were established in three municipalities for promotion and protection of the rights and safety, and the inclusion of marginalised women, girls, boys and men, in particular women and girls, affected by conflict, discrimination or abuse, including GBV. In pursuit of the creation of a model for integrated social care support to the most vulnerable at the municipal level the centres' profiles and typology of services were defined, informed by needs assessments per municipality. 42 partnerships with three municipalities, regional service provision offices and CSOs were key in co-designing and implementing



At the Puka Municipality during the #16Days campaign in the context of the joint UN project, "Ending Violence Against Women", funded by the government of Sweden. Photo: UNDP Albania.

MoHSP in the CEDAW review process and the GREVIO thematic state report, and MoJ on provisions related to sexual violence and violence against women and children. MoJ and MoHSP were further supported in preparing for bilateral meetings on chapters 23 and 19 of the EU *acquis* and development of respective roadmaps. Efforts were initiated to establish a femicide watch in Albania, providing technical support to the Ombudsperson.

7. Capacity building efforts were conducted in the municipalities of Vlora, Tirane, Kamez, Vau I Dejes, Puke, Malesi e Madhe, Fushe-Arrez, Has, Fier, Lushnje, Elbasan, Gramsh, Belsh, Cerrik, Librazhd, Peqin, Prrerjas, Durres, Kruja, Berat, Kukove, Polican, Dimal, Skrapar.



Young activists in Fushe-Arrez took a stand against gender-based & domestic violence during the #16Days march through their town, in the context of the joint UN project, "Ending Violence Against Women", funded by the government of Sweden. Photo: UNDP Albania.

the Resilience Centre model, focusing on increasing multisectoral coordination, empowering vulnerable individuals and providing integrated social care support services. As a result, within six months, 411 vulnerable individuals (40.9% girls, 29.2% boys and 26% women, 3.9% men), including 23 women victims of violence, 65 children with disabilities, 46 children and 136 youth, were supported through integrated social care services. Some 1,347 women, men, boys and girls were engaged in empowerment and advocacy interventions.

Efforts to establish a nationwide reintegration model for survivors of violence continued in 2023 at central and local levels. A total of 51 women and 114 children were supported with comprehensive services, including health, food, housing and employment assistance. Significant improvements in child protection case management prioritised the well-being of vulnerable individuals. Two regional One-Stop Centres (Barnahus model) for child survivors or witnesses of sexual abuse and other severe forms of violence were established, supporting 37 children and 16 non-abusive parents. Some 84 front-line professionals from health, social protection and law enforcement agencies were capacitated in effective trauma treatment practices, in addition to a costing exercise to ensure sustainabil-

ity of the service. A national survey on attitudes towards violence against children (VAC) was completed to inform programmes for behaviour change. Analysis of the Health Behaviour in School Children Survey, focused on findings related to child abuse and adolescent maltreatment, was completed and discussed with 381 participants from various institutions nationwide. Child protection emergency response services benefited 43 children identified as at high risk of abuse, of which four were foreign unaccompanied children. In 2023, 563 cases of children (155 girls) in contact with the law referred by the police received specialised child protection support and immediate counselling, 212 children identified at medium-to-high risk of abuse were referred to the Child Protection Units, while 67 children were supported with dedicated case management. In parallel, 47 child protection workers were capacitated in case management referral pathways. The UN also supported the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection (SACRP) to develop a set of quality criteria for service provision by the statutory child protection workforce and the monitoring methodology, approved by MoHSP and piloted in ten municipalities, enhancing central government's ability to monitor child protection services nationwide.

OUTPUT 4.2

Addressing gender stereotypes and harmful norms and practices

SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.b

The UN contribution throughout 2023 aimed at increasing the knowledge of rights-holders of gender stereotypes and harmful norms and practices through partnering with central and local governments, media and youth. A UN Albania position paper was issued, advocating for revision of the GE law and the development of a policy document addressing child, early or forced marriage and providing recommendations for legal framework changes. Efforts to combat child marriage and promote GE had impact across various sectors, including through the following:

- A new regulatory document was issued—the

Code of Ethics in Broadcasting—by the Audio-Visual Media Authority, specifically addressing child marriage.

- Community engagement played a crucial role, with 7 communities participating in dialogue and consensus building on alternatives to child marriage, adolescent girl rights and GE.
- 33 teachers (8 males) and 60 students (18 males) were reached with information on GE, positive gender norms and the risks associated with harmful practices. They were further supported to reach and engage an additional 635 schoolmates, parents and community members through creative activities. 12 exhibitions with

designs by teenagers were organised in 7 municipalities and attended by 272 students (71 males), and 1,400 community members were informed on the risks and prevention of child marriage and early union.

The regional youth-led research **Voices of YOUth: Gender Equality and Social Cohesion in the Western Balkans** was finalised, shedding light on the relevant experiences, challenges and opportunities. The research analysed data collected through an online survey reaching 1,232 youth in the region, national consultations and interviews. The UN support extended to the labour sector, where an MoU was signed between the State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate and the CPD to mainstream ILO C190 standards on eliminating violence and harassment in the workplace, aimed at joint institutional training and the development of an AP, a manual for handling C190-related cases in the workplace and upgraded inspection checklists.

Specific programmes engaged man and boys in addressing harmful practices. Eleven Be a Man clubs were supported to raise awareness, including one new club formed in 2023 in the Institute for Juveniles in Kavaje. Furthermore, over 1,100 men and boys were engaged, recognising them as important actors to address and transform deeply rooted beliefs about social norms. Through the Empowerment through Self-Defence approach, 1,068 students (606 girls) across 40 schools nationwide were reached to address root causes of gender inequalities and develop healthy boundaries between girls and boys at school.

During the 16 Days Campaign to End Gender-based Violence, key messages on prevention and response to GBV reached more than 220,000 people on social media and more than 2,400 people through various activities featuring around 180 events. The UN-supported media reports on VAW increased to at least 11, including a dedicated media forum that increased awareness of 14 media professionals (12 women) about VAW, services provided to survivors, the media's role in reporting VAW cases, and the latest CEDAW

Participants at the launching of "Voices of YOUth: Gender Equality and Social Cohesion in the Western Balkans" research. Photo: UN Women Albania/Ina Omuri



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Concluding Observations. In addition, preparation of a sports-focused gender mainstreaming guide is under way that will highlight gender disparities, barriers and opportunities within sports organisations with actionable recommendations. A survey on male perceptions on GE involved 204 respondents, with findings shared at the 4th Annual Forum of Men and Boys, recognising efforts of male activists from various sectors. The UN's year-long campaign on Gender Biased Sex Selection opened in public spaces of four municipalities, attracting attention of street viewers and media coverage. Additionally, a workshop on Good Parenting Skills involved 30 participants (26 women) from Tirane Municipality and MoJ.

OUTPUT 4.3

Gender-responsive planning and budgeting

SDG TARGETS: 5.c

In 2023, significant progress was made to improve gender-responsive governance in Albania at central and local levels and to ensure that the UN system delivers for women and girls. There was a significant increase in the total budget allocated to GE, amounting to **9.6 percent in the 2023–2025 Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTPB)**, compared to nine percent in the previous year. **Out of 128 budgetary programmes 53 are engendered**, placing Albania amongst the few countries globally with a system to track budget allocations dedicated to GE. All budget instructions include GRB in their criteria, and a **gender budget statement** was attached to the project budget. The **Gender-sensitive Citizens' Budget** ensured the transparency of the budget for all citizens. MoHSP's active role in advocating for gender key performance indicators in MTBP is a direct outcome of the partnership between the UN, MoFE and MoHSP that has enhanced the capacities of 280 public officials (11 ministries, 20 GE employees) on gender mainstreaming, integration of GRB in MTBP 2023–2025, and gender statistics.

In 2023, the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution conducted a gender audit focused on rural women's access to labour market and linkages with unpaid care work. Furthermore, the UN's strengthened partnership with Members of Parliament through the Parliamentary Institute resulted in GRB annexes and gender budget statements disseminated to parliamentary committees. This strategic dissemination laid a solid foundation for discussion of budgets from a gender perspective during commissions. The UN sustained capacity building efforts with media throughout 2023, resulted in 30 gender-sensitive media reports covering various topics, including GRB, EAW and women's political participation. More than 40 journalists acquired essential skills and knowledge through media fora, enhancing their ability to report on the gender dimensions of budgets and their impact on society. At the local level, ten municipalities actively imple-



Project Advisory Board Meeting of the regional project 'Transformative Financing for Gender Equality in the Western Balkans' with members from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia, May 3-4, 2023, in Tirana, Albania. Photo: UN Women Albania

mented GRB for the first time in 2023, by incorporating ten gender-sensitive initiatives into their annual budgets, and systematically included 30 new gender-responsive indicators. A total of 249 municipal staff, municipal councils and local gender machinery underwent capacity building on the application of GRB principles.

Furthermore, in 2023, in support of children's rights and SDGs, the UN, in consultation with MoFE, conducted a thorough analysis of Albania's spending on children, utilising Child-focused Public Expenditure Measurement methodology. This innovative approach informed policy recommendations to better align government budget with children's rights presented through a joint meeting with the SDG Parliamentary Sub-committee and a national event co-led with MoFE. Additionally, the potential impacts, costs and cost-effectiveness of the introduction of a child benefit in Albania were explored through a study that has enabled the opening of an evidence-based dialogue on introducing universal child benefit with plans in place to continue advocacy efforts during 2024.

OUTPUT 4.4

Gender equality mechanisms

SDG TARGETS: 5.a, 5.c

The UN efforts in 2023 contributed to increased gender mainstreaming in strategic planning, policy guidance, local governance, rural economic empowerment and youth engagement. Specific inputs were provided for integrating GE aspects into key strategies, including the Cross-sectoral Strategy on Decentralisation and Local Self-governance 2023–2030, the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030, and six draft IPA 2024 Action Documents. To ensure alignment with the EU legal and policy framework and guide future policies and planning, five gender mainstreaming guidance notes were finalised, covering areas including justice, anti-corruption, DRR, ICT, digitalisation and health. Local governance witnessed positive developments as four municipalities signed the European Charter for Equality of Women



Ejona Zaimaj, owner and administrator of Amalthia Farm. Photo: UN Women Albania

and Men in Local Life, contributing to a total of 18 Albanian signatories. Subsequent exchange between municipalities of Albania and North Macedonia showcased best practices in implementing gender-responsive local governance. Initiatives to support women in rural areas included 20 women engaged in handicrafts, beekeeping and dairy processing, and 180 marginalised women from specific areas that were supported to participate effectively in value chains and market systems, resulting in increased employment, self-employment, higher income and economic security. In the realm of youth-based interventions, four needs assessments were conducted to establish baselines and plan programmatic activities that involved 59 stakeholders. Additionally, 306 young people and 4,500 other individuals were reached through awareness-raising campaigns, emphasising GE and addressing GBV. Furthermore, the UN conducted an assessment report on GE in land ownership that significantly enhances understanding, identifies priority areas for action and addresses bottlenecks to empower rural women, particularly in terms of monitoring SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2 and improving access to productive resources for empowerment.

OUTPUT 4.5

Leadership and participation

SDG TARGETS: 5.1



Over 40 media professionals explored topics like gender responsive budgeting, violence against women and the media's vital role in portraying women in politics and elections. Photo: UN Women Albania

In the realm of women's political participation, the UN launched a needs assessment to evaluate the legislative, representative and oversight capacities of local-level women politicians. The insights gained will serve as a foundation for future programming and tailored support to address specific legislative, representative and oversight needs identified among such politicians. Efforts to empower women in agribusiness involved the organisation of diverse capacity-building activities that led to increased interest from 22 women in two municipalities to engage in agribusiness incubators, taking on various managerial and administrative roles. The improved skills and knowledge gained through these activities positively contributed to enhanced self-esteem, confidence and decision-making capacities, preparing them for skills-based roles and responsibilities

in agribusiness incubators.

Furthermore, 20 journalists and media professionals, predominantly women, actively participated in the 1st Media Forum focused on addressing issues of sexism, gender stereotypes and VAW in elections and politics within the media landscape. It particularly contextualised these concerns in light of the 2023 local elections and beyond. Building on this, an additional 40 journalists and media representatives in three municipalities were equipped with skills and knowledge to effectively tackle these issues in media coverage. Finally, 14 women politicians improved their dialogue with media professionals, addressing the nexus between disinformation, gender-based discrimination and VAW in Politics and during Elections.

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Demography dynamics, including shrinking birth rates and outward migration, pose a challenge to Albania and its ambitions for sustainable economic development. Sustaining quality health and education systems is key to combating migration ambitions and building opportunities for young people. Across economic indicators there have been positive signs of growth, though distribution remains uneven with some of the population still at risk of poverty. An effective social protection system can mitigate this impact. Efforts are still required to enhance the reach, quality and oversight of social care services, addressing social inequalities and ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups, PwD and minorities, as well as reforms to the care economy to encourage more women into the labour market.

Economic diversification and structural transformation are crucial for long-term development with opportunities for expansion in sectors such as tourism, digitisation and technology. Encouraging wider participation of women and youth across all sectors, along with supporting the growth of small and medium enterprises, can contribute to a stronger and more resilient economy. Equipping young people with skills for life and employability remains an important priority requiring well-prepared and coordinated systems.

Albania is very susceptible to the impacts of climate change, with agriculture, hydroelectricity and tourism particularly at risk. Developing and implementing effective climate change adaptation strategies is essential to mitigate the adverse effects on the economy and the livelihoods of the population.

Biodiversity assets and natural capital of protected areas are a critical contribution to glob-

al environmental targets. Putting a system of sustainable funding for PAs and financial instruments in place remains outstanding and is necessary to support effective management of those areas.

Ensuring good governance, transparency and rule of law are ongoing challenges. Strengthening institutions at central and local levels and enhancing accountability mechanisms are essential for creating an environment conducive to sustainable development.

Up-to-date and reliable data are key to the design and assessment of government service planning. Important will be the publication of the 2023 Census results and ensuring geographically nuanced, gender-disaggregated data feed into the analysis and mapping of future service needs.

Human rights, including in areas of legal provisions for the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and foreign citizens in line with international standards has seen major improvement, but continuous efforts are required to strengthen measures protecting their rights and facilitating their access and inclusion in health, education, housing and the labour market. Specific attention to the legal details surrounding the procedural safeguards and rights guaranteed to recognised stateless persons are required. Specific recommendations to Albania from the Human Rights Treaty bodies on elimination of discrimination of women, rights of the child and outstanding recommendations from the UPR require consistent follow up and action. Focus should also be put to increasing awareness of VAW, necessitating tailored campaigns to reach all segments of society.

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Regional programmes continue to be catalytic to achieving results. Through engagement with several actions, UN Albania's support to regional cooperation fosters and promotes the exchange of knowledge and technical know-how within the region. The key areas of support are as follows:

- **EU-funded initiative Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP 2) (2019–2023)**, implemented jointly by ILO and the Regional Cooperation Council. Aiming to improve employment opportunities and the working conditions of women and men in the WB, its interventions focused on 5 areas: i) informal employment and undeclared work, ii) labour inspection, iii) social dialogue, iv) employment policies and measures, and v) engagement of WB countries in EU employment and social policies.
- **EU–ILO initiative Youth Guarantee Technical Assistance Facility**, which supports the WB6 economies throughout implementation of the Youth Guarantee, an innovative activation scheme targeting NEET (SDG Target 8.6).
- **Climate proofing for sustainable development in the Western Balkans (2023–2026)**, funded jointly by the Austrian government and UNEP Europe Office and launched in October 2023 with the organisation of inception meetings in all participating countries.
- **South-East European sub-regional platform to beat pollution⁸ (2018–2023)**, funded by Italy's

Ministry for Energy Security and co-financed by UNEP Europe Office with the objectives of: i) setting up a sub-regional platform to beat pollution in South-east Europe, identify and address regional priorities on environment and human health and the Polluter Pays Principle, studies on air pollution and waste management in WB, and ii) development of a feasibility study to assess the needs for an ad hoc pollution programme for South-east Europe and the role of UNEP in the region, including donor mapping.

- **Strengthening urban and rural wastewater management in the Mediterranean region**, implemented by UNESCO. Analysis of national and regional needs in the water sector was undertaken, identifying the needs, recommendations and priorities to address crucial aspects of water resource management.
- **Local democracy in the Western Balkans (Re-LOaD2)**, implemented by UNDP. The project is working with local governments and incentivising them to use public funding for CSOs in a transparent and development-oriented manner while recognising local needs.
- **ITU–UNEP–UNITAR joint project e-Waste Monitor for the Western Balkans**. Initiated in 2022, this joint project aimed to collect internationally comparable e-Waste statistics in the region, leading to the development of a comprehensive report presented in December 2023.
- **Knowledge for reform action in the Western Balkans⁹**, a programme supported by Norway and implemented by UNOPS, aims to support governmental institutions in the WB countries in their reform processes to achieve EU accession. The programme offers customised technical expertise to beneficiary government institutions responsible for implementing reforms at the national level. This support includes pro-

cess and chapter-specific advice with a view to ensuring full compliance with EU requirements in priority areas identified by the six national counterparts in the WB.

- **Transformative financing for gender equality towards more transparent, inclusive and accountable governance in the Western Balkans (2020–2024)** implemented by UN Women and supported financially by Sweden. The overall objective is that WB countries (Albania, BiH, Kosovo,¹⁰ and Serbia) systematically integrate GE and become more transparent at all stages of national and local policymaking and budgeting processes.
- **Implementing norms, changing minds**, implemented by UN Women, focused on addressing VAW in the region. Regional research into femicide,¹¹ supported by FemPlatz, was undertaken in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, with the findings and recommendations currently being utilised by the UN Joint Programme on EVAW to establish a femicide watch in Albania.
- **Women count**, implemented by UN Women and promoting the production, analysis and use of gender data in the Europe and Central Asia region and globally. The second phase of the Programme supports the production, availability and use of gender data and builds capacities of data producers and users to inform and monitor policies from a gender perspective.
- **Strengthening the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative, respect for diversity, and trust in Albania, BiH, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo**, funded by the UN Peace Building Fund and jointly implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNESCO. This joint project focuses on partnering with young men and women to address divisive narratives and hate speech. The first of its kind regional research¹² on GE and social cohesion from a youth perspective was also produced.
- **Western Balkans joint actions against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings**, implemented by IOM and aiming to strength-

en protection efforts to counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

- **Building institutional capacity in the Western Balkans to deal with challenges related to reintegration, resocialization and rehabilitation of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their families from conflict zones**, implemented by IOM.
- **Addressing mixed migration flows in the Western Balkans**, implemented by IOM.
- **Support for evidence-based migration management in the Western Balkans**, implemented by IOM.
- **Western Balkans Readmission Capacity Building Facility**, implemented by IOM.
- **Western Balkans Integrated Border Management Facility**, implemented by IOM.
- **EU regional support to protection-sensitive migration management systems in the Western Balkans - Phase III**, implemented by IOM.
- **WB return and reintegration programme - Phase II**, implemented by IOM.
- **Strengthening health systems resilience in the Western Balkans (2021–2023)**, implemented by WHO, focuses on strengthening essential health services and systems, including service delivery and increased resilience.
- **Strengthening national and local systems to support the effective socio-economic integration of returnees in the Western Balkans**, implemented by UNDP, aiming to develop and implement measures for sustainable reintegration of returnees.
- **EU-funded Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans (CC4WB)**, implemented by UNESCO, with the focus on fostering intercultural dialogue by enhancing the cultural and creative sectors for increased socio-economic impact.

8. <https://www.seepollutionplatform.org>

9. <https://www.knowledge4reformation.org>

10. *Reference to Kosovo shall be understood in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).*

11. [Social and institutional responses to femicide in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia | Publications | UN Women – Albania](#)

12. [Voices of YOUth: Gender Equality and Social Cohesion in the Western Balkans | Publications | UN Women – Albania](#)

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

To implement the UNSDCF in 2023, UN agencies worked together through the results and thematic groups to jointly implement planned initiatives through a programme approach and in line with results-based management principles.

The four **Results Groups**, under the umbrella of UNSDCF 2022–2026 and the leadership of the Joint Executive Committee (JEC), continued joint efforts towards UNSDCF implementation and in support of national priorities. The key results of these joint efforts include the annual update of the Common Country Analysis (CCA), the Annual Performance Review and the development of the Joint Work Plans (JWPs) 2024–2025. Furthermore, analytical deep dives produced on topical issues to inform our work in the country include: ‘Resilience and Vulnerability—Navigating the Effects of the Ukraine-Russia War on Albanian Agriculture and Rural Development’, and ‘Albania Profile on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management’.

Through the joint efforts of the Results Groups measurable results were achieved to build social protection to ensure no one is left behind, end VAWC, strengthen local government, and promote the SDGs and sustainable business practices with the private sector in key areas of the economy. We were able to present these results at the JEC annual meeting in December 2023 where progress was evaluated and priorities for the following year were discussed and agreed upon.

The UN in Albania continued to strengthen coherence through joint programming, in which it has a successful implementation record, demonstrating a high impact of coordinated inter-agency work. By the end of 2023, nine UN Joint Programmes (UNJPs) were under implementation, five of which were funded through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, two by the Joint SDG Fund, one by a bilateral agreement between the development partner and the implementing UN agencies, and one through the UN Peace Building Fund.

The **Gender Thematic and Results Group (GTRG)** was set up in 2012 and currently comprises 14 UN entities. In line with the **Gender Theme Groups Standards and Procedures** the group is chaired by the UN Women Country Representative. It is guided by clear ToR and its annual activities are included in the GTRG Workplan, which integrates the relevant actions to implement the UNCT System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) Scorecard. In 2023, the group convened quarterly and benefited from the systematic participation of the RC. More than 90 percent of workplan activities were completed or initiated. Achievements in 2023 include:

- **Sustained contribution to implementing normative commitments on GE.** GTRG led the UN Albania engagement on CEDAW, including development of an addendum to the previous UNCT confidential report, highlighting pending challenges and new emerging issues. In addition, ahead of the formal CEDAW review session, members of the Albania delegation increased their preparedness thanks to the **preparatory mock session** organised by GTRG, under the leadership of UN Women and jointly with UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, OHCHR and the RCO, engaging 28 members of the Albania delegation, representing all line ministries. GTRG investments in this key process contributed to constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee and the issuance of a strong set of Concluding Observations, which were formally presented through a dedicated session of the National Council for Gender Equality at which the GTRG Chair was invited to address the members.
- Three laws or strategies currently undergoing reform were reviewed by GTRG from a GE perspective: the Reproductive Health Law, the Criminal Code, and the Migration Strategy. Comments were shared to the leading agency or institution drafting the documents for their consideration and aiming to increase gender mainstreaming and GE considerations across these policies and programmes.



UN Albania Country Team retreat, 2023

- **Joint advocacy efforts** to promote GE were significantly increased. The group issued three joint statements: an **Op-ed on the importance of reviewing the GE Law, Promoting women's leadership and participation in the local elections**, and a **Joint statement against GBV**. Several of the issues raised through these advocacy efforts were echoed by other actors including CSOs and NHRIs and reflected in the CEDAW Concluding Observations 2023.
- **Improved UNCT accountability for gender mainstreaming.** The UNCT SWAP Annual Report revealed a sustained positive performance by UN Albania that exceeded requirements in ten of the 15 indicators assessed and meets requirements for three of them. There was an increase in scoring for indicator 5.2 on GE capacities thanks to finalisation and adoption of a GE induction package for new employees, developed under the leadership of UN Women and with inputs from GTRG. UNCT will conduct the new SWAP comprehensive assessment in 2024.
- **UN personnel has enhanced capacities for gender mainstreaming and GE.** In 2023, 69 UN personnel (8 men; 61 women) from 11 UN agencies increased their capacities on GEWE. Three training sessions were carried out for the personnel responding to the findings of the gender capacities and learning needs assessment conducted in 2022: i) **a gender responsive M&E and data training**, in January 2023, organised by UN Women and the RCO, ii) **a gender responsive communications training**, conducted in October 2023 by UN Women, UNFPA and the RCO, and iii) **a GE marker and Human Rights marker online training**, which took place in October 2023 under the leadership of UN Women and the RCO.

Human rights: As we look ahead to the Summit of the Future in 2024, we must come together to strengthen our commitment to the timeless values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In 2023, the RCO, jointly with UNCT, closely monitored human



UN Resident Coordinator Fiona McCluney meets with the new cohort of the UN Albania Youth Advisory Group. Photo: UN in Albania

rights issues, identifying those necessitating immediate action. UNCT supported the CEDAW, CRC and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination reporting processes, and is gearing up for the UPR taking place in 2024. The UNCT is actively engaged in disseminating the Concluding Observations of the various committees and, in light of this, continues promoting enhanced youth engagement in monitoring and reporting processes and building their capacities. Mapping of the CEDAW and CRC concluding observations under each of the outputs of UNSDCF was completed to inform and account for these observations during the development of the JWPs 2024–2025. Significant support to the NHRIs materialised through the Ombudsperson **Annual Conference**, which commemorated the 75th Anniversary of UDHR and the 25th Anniversary of the Albanian Constitution.

Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse: In 2021, UNCT Albania established an Interagency Task Force, under the overall strategic supervision of the UN RC and with 13 appointed focal points, working as a dedicated UNCT-wide entity committed to prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In 2023, the Task Force jointly updated the standard operating procedures that outline the steps and measures in suspected or alleged cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, in line with the latest guidelines. The Task Force held regular meetings and, in coordination with UNCT, developed

the 2024 AP, leveraging insights gained from monitoring the advancements made in 2023.

Youth: The UN Youth Task Force (UNYTF) continued in coordinating UN agencies to share initiatives and promote youth empowerment throughout the year. An important moment was the coordination with the Minister of State for Youth and Children. Key priorities of the minister and UN agencies were discussed in a joint meeting, while three agencies (UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA) joined the process of supporting the National Youth Agency during the Third Call for CSOs working with and for youth, supporting three specific initiatives emerging from this process. This effort enabled the creation of synergies between the agencies and the ministry to advance the work towards implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2022–2030 and UN Youth Strategy 2030 by focusing on youth engagement, reaching vulnerable youth in various parts of the country and supporting their meaningful participation at the local level. In 2023, UNYTF led the process of selecting a new cohort for the UN Youth Advisory Group, designed to give opportunities for youth from across the country to apply. Following selection, youth members of the advisory group engaged in the UN Week activities promoting youth engagement for climate change, activism, health, refugee rights, youth and agriculture, and youth and migration.

Communication: In 2023, there was a strategic focus on strengthening joint communication channels, including a more extensive targeted outreach to stakeholders through the UN Albania quarterly newsletter, the bilingual UN Albania website and greater presence on X (former Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The growth in followers on social media averaged ten percent and audience engagement 20 percent on a year-on-year basis. Our commitment to transparent and accessible results reporting was further enhanced with the development of a user-friendly web edition of our Albania Progress Report. During #UNWeekAlbania2023 there was a targeted promotional campaign centred on UN principles, emphasising themes of peace, cooperation and the SDGs. This initiative aimed to heighten awareness, accelerate action and spotlight the tangible results of collective endeavours led by the RC and UNCT. The fight against GBV received heightened attention through a robust joint campaign—#16DaysOfActivism against GBV. This initiative, designed to raise awareness and advocate for change, underlines the UN’s commitment to combating GBV and promoting a safer and more equitable world. In a concerted effort to enhance internal communication and streamline the integration of new staff and consultants into the UN environment, a comprehensive orientation pack was developed and implemented. This initiative, a pivotal component of our internal communications plan, has been instrumental in fostering a cohesive and informed UN community. Other significant communications efforts in 2023 include promoting the UN General Assembly, with specific focus on the SDG summit.

Disability inclusion: Following the recommendations of an accessibility assessment of UN House and a Multi-functional Centre in Lushnja renovation works on both sites took place during 2023, using Development Coordination Office seed funding to advance disability inclusion at the country level. As a result, the two premises are more accessible to the public, particularly for PwDs. Under the RCO leadership, UNCT produced a **video championing disability inclusion** internally and externally where the RC shared the importance of building capacity and raising awareness of disability inclusion within the UN, moving from guidance into practice, launched on 3 December, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Also in 2023, a consultation with PwD organisations, parents and disability activists was held to discuss and receive recommendations on the annual update of the CCA.

The **Operations Management Team (OMT)** has been important in providing substantial, incremental and meaningful support for implementation of the JWP for 2023. Harmonised operational procedures for **13 services** were carried out and **27 Long Term Agreements (LTAs)** monitored, with 11 amendments. The Team reported a realised cost avoidance for 2022 of **USD 226,742**.

The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) Annual Review 2023 was carried out and implemented in a timely manner, with utmost dedication and professionalism by all OMT and Working Groups members. The spirit of teamwork predominated throughout the process, and decisions were made collegially through discussions and brainstorming. **Fourteen entities** participated in the BOS data review. OMT scaled up its work in preparing harmonised evaluation of services and goods provision under all LTAs. Since 2009, when first joint initiatives and LTAs were established, this is the first time such a harmonised approach has been undertaken. It required a lot of background work, and the results and analysis will be reflected in the coming BOS Annual Review 2024. OMT was entrusted by UNCT with establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Working Group, and ToR and a workplan for 2024 have been elaborated and endorsed by the UNCT.

UN Albania’s Operations Management Team conducting BOS annual review. Photo: UN Albania



2.3. Financial overview and resource mobilisation

For implementation of UNSDCF 2022–2026 in 2023, the 19 UN agencies in Albania had a budget available of USD 87 million, with core resources of USD 5.5 million (6%) and mobilised resources of USD 81.7 million (94%). The utilisation rate by the end of 2023 was 69 percent: i.e. the UN system delivered interventions worth USD 60 million,¹³ with the balance carried over into 2024. The largest financial portfolio continues to be that of Human Capital Development, followed by Green Growth, Innovation and Climate Change, Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights, and Gender-responsive Governance. (Figure 1)

At the Output level (Figure 2), delivery was largest for outputs 1.2 Education, and 2.2 Sustainable and resilient economic growth and green and blue economy transition, in line with the UN response to the country needs to address recovery from the 2019 earthquake.

Figure 1. Budget and delivery (USD Million), January to December 2023

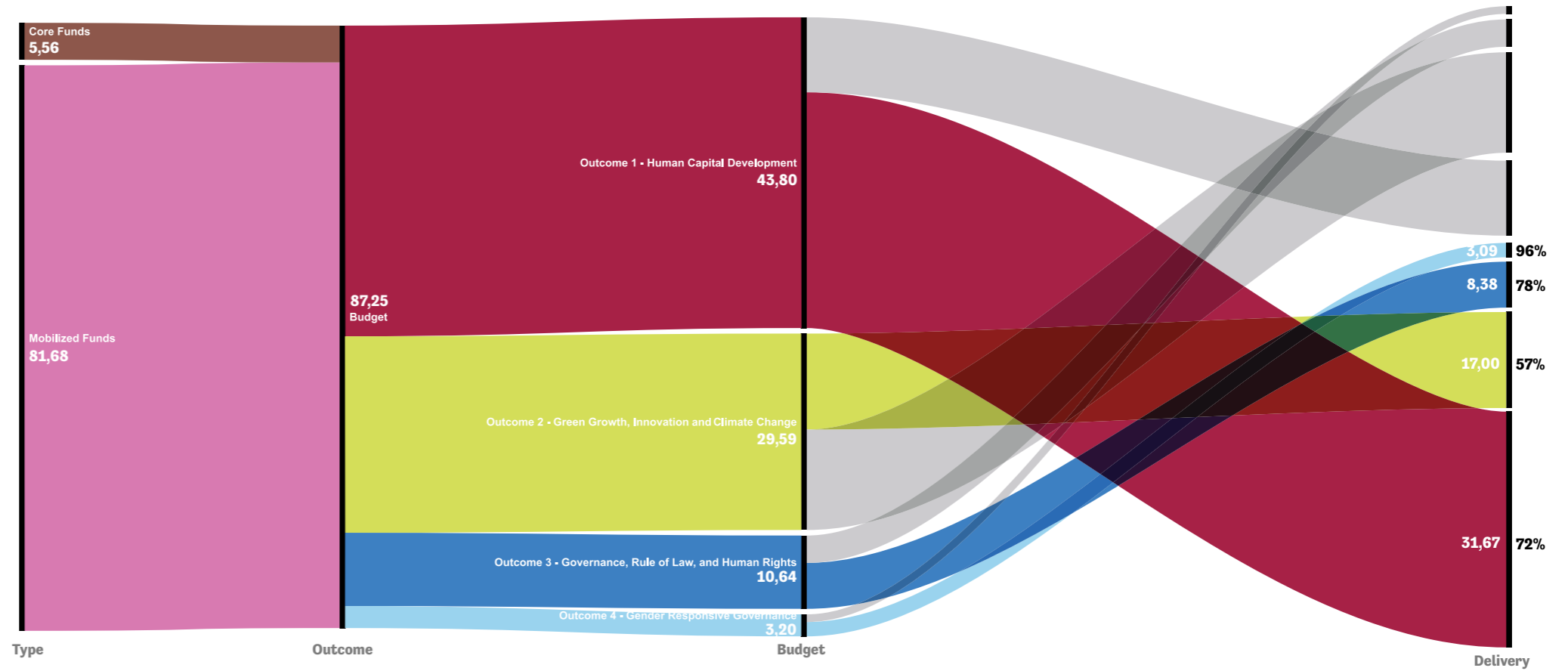
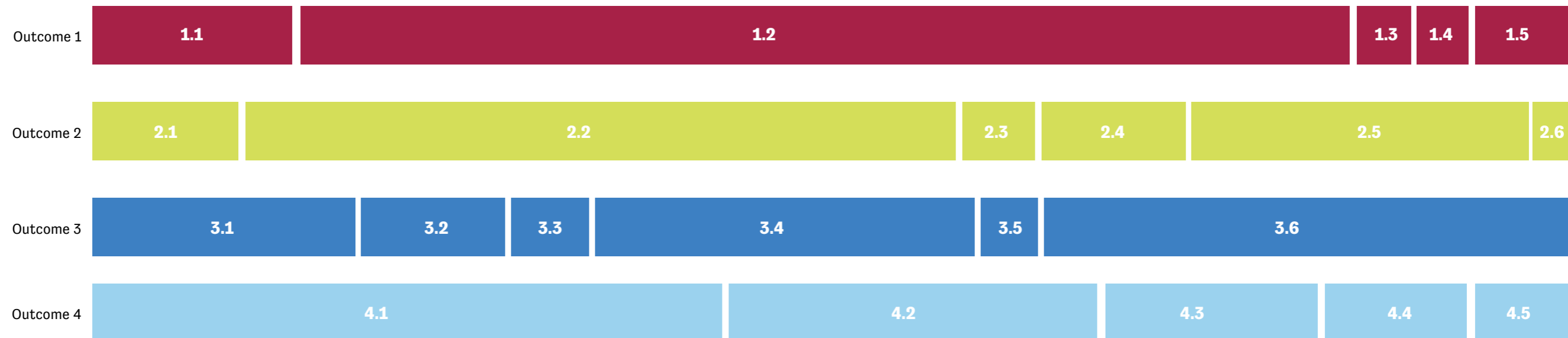


Figure 2. Output delivery, 2023



13. Financial data in this report is provided by the UN Agencies in line with their financial reporting cycle.

CHAPTER 3

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2024

In 2024, the UN starts the third year of implementation of UNSDCF 2022–2026. The planned activities are laid out in the JWPs 2024–2025 approved for implementation with contributing UN agencies and line ministers co-chairing each Outcome. The JEC of the UNSDCF endorsed the UN’s initiatives for 2024, noted their alignment with government priorities and welcomed the focus on the domestic social agenda including health, education, GE and social welfare policies. The focus on support to Albania was in its EU accession priorities and efforts to enhance capacities at central and local levels, especially a priority for marginalised populations in evidence-based policymaking and service delivery.

The Summit of the Future (September 2024) will forge a new international consensus on how the UN will deliver a better present and safeguard the future. The UN will be actively involved to maximise the success of the Summit and create a maximally enabling environment to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. In line with the Secretary General’s Call to Action on Human Rights and system-wide strategies, it will emphasise human rights and GE. The UN will aid government in legislative compliance, enhancing institutional capacity and working towards eliminating gender disparities, preventing GBV and engaging youth as change agents. In 2024, Albania will undergo the UPR Fourth Cycle. Contributions of civil society, NHRIs and the UN are expected by April 2024, and the national report will be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in August 2024. Fostering joint work across the UN system for peacebuilding and reconciliation will continue escalating the positive results from implementation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund project Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality & Trust.

The UN will actively support the post-Census analysis and MICS preparation, shaping policy development and tailoring projects to Albania’s needs based on findings and an understanding of demographic change. Support to high and technical level government SDG

committees and the parliamentary SDG sub-committee is anticipated to secure political buy-in, financing and accountability to the SDGs putting the global agenda into national practice. The UN will engage in financing a series of dialogues with national stakeholders to support the design of the financing strategy for the country’s priorities, building on the DFA and INFF roadmap. Extended focus will be placed on supporting government to implement the national commitments made to the Transforming Education Summit, Food Systems Summit, and biodiversity and nature. The Roadmap for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions will be finalised, following consultations with all partners that started in December 2023, while UNCT will prepare an application to the first call from the Joint SDG Fund. Meanwhile, following the successful application to the Digital Transformation Window of the Joint SDG Fund, UNCT will formulate a strong project document in line with Albania’s needs and priorities. In EU accession efforts, a mega accelerator for the SDGs, the UN will aid the country in meeting benchmarks and addressing gaps while engaging with the diaspora.

Given reliance on partner funding and a contracting donor environment, the UN implements its Resource Mobilisation Strategy for joint efforts. The Albania SDG Acceleration Fund will be strongly emphasised for mobilising resources, including government contributions. Focus will turn more to the private sector’s role in Green Economy policy, digital space development and youth empowerment. Consultations with the UNCT Youth Advisory Group and Task Force, involving the Minister of State for Youth and Children, will be heightened, contributing to implementation of the UN Youth Strategy 2030 and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

UNCT will keep on implementing its BOS, promoting common operations, gender balance and disability inclusion, and preventing exploitation.

Annexes

ANNEX A

Albania SDG Acceleration Fund and associated joint programmes

Albania has been a Delivering as One country since the start of the pilot phase in 2007, and has completed three One UN programme cycles from 2007 to 2021. The year 2023 saw the second year of implementation of the Government of Albania–United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022–2026.

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

The JEC,¹⁵ in its role as overseer of the overall contribution of the UN to Albania’s development via the One Programme, decides on specific allocations of resources from the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. The allocation decisions are based on the relevant priority activities, including respective budgets and implementation partners, set out in the cooperation frameworks and government strategies in place.

On behalf of the UN in Albania, accountability lies with the UN RC for overall management of the Fund, with the UN RC Office serving as Secretariat. It is administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office in New York, as Administrative Agent. All actions of the UN in Albania are organised through four Outcome workplans, corresponding to the four Outcomes of the One Programme.

Actions financed by the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund are included in these workplans, which are prepared jointly with the government counterparts and signed by the UN RC, and government Outcome Co-Chairs. Government has a critical role in the discussion of priorities, monitoring of progress and mid-course adjustment.

In 2021, phase II of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund was established to accompany UNSDCF 2022–2026 implementation, with an MoU signed in July 2021. While phase II of the Fund was expected to come to operational closure on 31 December 2026, it was extended for another year in December 2023 to allow for implementation of the new Joint Programme Business Partnerships and Solutions for SDGs, which will continue to be operational beyond the Fund’s end date of 31 December 2026. Phase II of Albania SDG Acceleration Fund will be operational from 31 December 2026 until 31 December 2027.

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

From 2007 to 2023, overall contributions from 16 partners to the Fund reached USD 74 million as reflected in Chart 1. In December 2023, the Standard Administrative Arrangement with Sweden was signed for a new contribution to phase II of the Fund, to be implemented in Albania by UNDP, ILO, UNIDO and FAO starting in 2024.

By the end of 2023, five joint projects (joint output work) continued to be implemented with support from the Funds, two from phase I and three from phase II, ensuring strengthened UN coherence, coordination and collaboration. The details of the joint projects’ main results for the year, focusing on significant highlights rather than providing an exhaustive list of results, are reported below.

Chart 1: Deposits (USD) from UN partners for the period 2007–2023



ALBANIA SDG ACCELERATION FUND PHASE I

EU FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN ALBANIA: Implementation of the EU GE *acquis* (EU4GE)

OUTCOME 4—GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

The UNJP EU for Gender Equality in Albania: Implementation of the EU GE *acquis* (EU4GE) responded to governance efforts at central and local levels to comply with global norms and standards on GEWE, and implement the EU GE *acquis*. The overall aim of the programme is to enhance transposition of the *acquis* and achieve GE outcomes in line with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs (particularly SDG 5), and to strengthen the gender and socially responsive governance outcomes at central and local levels, in line with international human rights norms and standards such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention and the recommendations of the UPR.

At the central level several strategic and planning documents (draft national strategies, APs, IPA programming documents) were reviewed and provided with concrete recommendations for gender mainstreaming. In addition, gender mainstreaming

tools were developed in five policy areas and exchanges among central level officials in the WB were organised. At the local level five municipalities—three of which (Durrës, Elbasan and Tirane) are existing signatories to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, and two of which (Gramsh and Gjirokaster) are new signatories—have developed and approved their local gender APs and been supported with gender-responsive youth development plans. It is important to highlight that during the last months of project implementation, there was increased interest of other municipalities (not initially targeted through this intervention) to become familiar with and sign this European Charter. UN Women provided tailored support to four municipalities (Kavaje, Lezhe, Lushnje and Vau I Dejes) based on their demand and available resources from the project to build their capacities on the European Charter and for signing it. As a result of the support provided by EU4GE, the number of signatories for Albania has increased by 33 percent, reaching 18 (out of 61 municipalities; 30%).

Some 180 vulnerable women and their families benefited directly from implementation of value chain interventions in four targeted municipalities or administrative units (AUs): Farka (Tirane), Labinot (Elbasan), Lunxher (Gjirokaster) and Gramsh. In

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

addition, awareness-raising sessions, capacity building of young people focusing on out of the box activities and stakeholder consultations based on the needs assessment on gender sensitive interventions, were carried out, including with young girls and boys as beneficiaries. These sessions informed and led to policy discussions to develop gender responsive youth development, and outreach work at the municipal level undertaken in the municipalities of Elbasan, Gramsh, Gjirokaster, Korce and Tirane. In addition, a Policy Document on Child and Early Marriage was developed and disseminated. Both UNFPA and UN Women have tried where possible to synchronise the AUs where interventions were planned.

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

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

The early days of 2020 found Albania mobilising efforts to recover from the devastating November 2019 earthquake (6.3 on the Richter Scale), from which 51 people died, more than 900 were injured, some 17,000 temporarily displaced, with more than 200,000 (7% of the population) in 11 municipalities¹⁶ affected, and thousands of buildings destroyed or seriously damaged, including public and private infrastructure, homes, schools and healthcare facilities.

Government, with rapid support from the international community, undertook immediate search and rescue operations followed by short-term life-saving assistance for the displaced. The Albanian government received immediate emergency support from UN agencies in Albania (UNDP, WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF; see publication 'UN support for Albania earthquake recovery').¹⁷ A UN Disaster Assistance Coordination team organised by the Office for 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,¹⁸ released on 5 February 2020 to support preparations for the Together for Albania Donor Conference,¹⁹ which resulted in pledges to an amount of EUR 1.15 billion. The UN received a medal of honour from the prime minister in appreciation of the organisation's rapid support during the immediate response phase.²⁰

Aligned to PDNA and in collaboration with the government to support the reconstruction and recovery efforts to build back better,²¹ successful resource mobilisation efforts resulted in USD 13.4 million unearmarked contributions to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund from the governments of Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK) to support national earthquake efforts in the areas of i) education, ii) economic recovery and resilience, iii) agriculture, iv) community infrastructure, v) social protection, vi) child protection, vii) GE, and viii) DRM. In 2023, UN agencies UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and FAO continued to support the government in identifying and addressing areas of emergency support and immediate need, aiming to reduce the impact on the poorest, and other vulnerable groups.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE (ERR)

Under the project Economic Recovery and Resilience, impactful support reached 49 businesses in Lezhe and Durres through the In Motion Methodology. The main implementation challenge is linked primarily to the significant rise in prices for equipment and commercial image upgrades—both critical components of the business support interventions—due to the overall increase in inflation in global economies.

This, in turn, has led to higher programme costs and adversely affected implementation times. To soften these consequences, more time has been spent negotiating with suppliers, though this has led to a reduction in the number of supported micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

AGRICULTURE

Under the first Output on the project on agriculture, FAO undertook a re-assessment of needs for the affected farmers and entities identified by MoARD. This effort involved defining criteria for support, preparing the grant operational manual, and inviting prospective beneficiaries to complete applications using an electronic platform for online applications. FAO, in collaboration with MoARD, assessed the grant requests, issued grant agreements and provided direct beneficiary grants to support equipment, live assets and construction and reconstruction activities. Utilisation of grants was monitored throughout the process, and application procedures were facilitated by FAO experts and public agricultural extension services.

Additionally, FAO contracted a construction engineer to design and oversee standard construction projects for each beneficiary. Out of 44 grant support requests (from 40 farmers and 4 agribusinesses), FAO signed grant agreements with 34 beneficiaries, including for procurement of a cow barn and two pregnant heifers. Beneficiaries were evaluated based on eligibility criteria and the completeness of documentation, with decisions to support them endorsed by the Technical Committee.

Financial support for barn reconstruction was disbursed in four instalments (pre-payment), while support for equipment and live animals (cows) was provided in two instalments.

FAO monitored the implementation of construction works and related activities on-site. In addition to grant support, the project distributed animal feed to 30 livestock owners, including 17 tonnes of crushed corn, 40 tonnes of hay and 43 tonnes of alfalfa. FAO continued providing training in animal feeding practices for earthquake-affected farmers in 2023. A video showcasing the significant positive impacts of the project is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/xjJUugSKLHU?feature=shared>.

In 2023, through a Letter of Agreement with professors at the Agriculture University of Tirana, an assessment of the financial literacy of agricultural producers and their advisory and extension service needs was conducted. Based on the findings, two specific syllabuses were developed on access to finance and financial literacy.

Trainings were conducted in the three target areas of the project (Durres, Lezhe, Tirane), with up to 300 participants (farmers and extension specialists), who expressed a high level of interest, particularly in discussions regarding agricultural and IPARD support schemes. Through training activities on FAO Disaster Damage and Loss Assessment (DLA) methodology, there was recognition of the need for a standard methodology and software for data collection and analysis, aimed at technical staff of central and decentralised branches of MoARD, INSTAT and decentralised administrations. The project aimed to support Albanian stakeholders in institutionalising the DLA methodology in agriculture for their use.

It proposed formalisation of an inter-governmental working group and the nomination of a leading DLA institution to coordinate various disaster events, collect data and monitor progress towards global targets on resilience (Sendai Framework of DRR indicator C2; SDG targets 1.5.2, and 11.5.2) and establish structures for regular data collection on damage and loss, and to capture smaller scale (and localised) disaster impacts.

However, the project could not proceed with conducting pilot data collection due to government commitments to support this activity. In 2023, FAO prepared a background paper on the legal basis for disaster management and the institutionalisation of a methodology for DLA.

16. Durres, Kamez, Kavaje, Kruje, Kurbin, Lezhe, Mirdite, Rrogozhine, Shijak, Tirane and Vore.

17. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/next/files/un_support_to_albania_earthquake_recovery.pdf

18. *Assessing the impact of the earthquake on affected sectors and populations, and studying the socio-economic development of affected districts and at a wider national level. The PDNA defined a recovery strategy with short-, medium- and long-term needs, priority actions and costing, as well as an intervention framework, identified a total need of EUR 1.076 billion.*

19. https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/international-donors-conference-albania-earthquake_en

20. *The certificate reads: "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."*

21. *All construction will follow the Build Back Better principle, applying sustainable building norms and providing an opportunity to sustainably reduce future risk. Build Back Better 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, the special measure will bring improvements to energy efficiency, to 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.*

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Community Infrastructure Support (CIS) project, targets the repair and reconstruction of three education facilities in Durres Municipality damaged by the earthquake of 26 November 2019. CIS supports efforts from other donors and GoA to mitigate the impacts caused by the earthquake. The project implementation is based on two important pillars: Build Back Better and Build Back Together. The recovery process is considered as an opportunity to strengthen resilience by reducing inequality and the vulnerability of women and other groups. The project activities will result in education facilities being repaired or reconstructed, with a strong emphasis on sustainability, inclusiveness and environmental protection, and improvement of the quality of the education environment. The project is helping to meet the targets of SDGs 4, 10 and 17.

Some of the key achievements for 2023 include:

- Construction permits are issued and civil works begun to reconstruct or repair the education facilities for three facilities: i) Jusuf Hoti joint school, ii) Isuf Ferra kindergarten and gym, and iii) Zyber Sallaku 9-year school, aiming to offer better services to 810 students and children and 51 teachers, as well as the 48,500 member community.
- 3 intermediate place checks were carried out with participation of 40 people from the community, teachers, students and local authorities. The meetings were conceptualised as ongoing dialogue with the communities so that they become ‘co-owners’ of the reconstruction process.
- Bidding processes were organised for implementation of civil works, and 2 construction companies were selected through an open procurement process.
- Construction works started on three education facilities and are progressing as per the approved timeline. The civil works are following the Build Back Better principle, offering stronger and resilient education facilities.
- 3 Health and Safety Education (HSE) training sessions and inspections were held on construction sites to ensure all workers and specialists understood the HSE principles, methods and standards. 17 constructing workers (all men) took part. Application of Health and Safety principles have a particular focus for the CIS project.

Contractors were trained in EU standards on health and safety at the workplace and supervised so that the standards are implemented.

- A Project Steering Committee including all actors met on 19 October 2023.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The project Strengthening the social protection response after the earthquake in Albania (Earthquake Social Protection Response) continued implementation until June 2023, consolidating results on the ground, emphasising the importance of ownership for local authorities (municipalities of Durres, Kruje and Shijak) in addressing social inclusion and protection, as well as the needs of the most vulnerable groups impacted by the earthquake. In its final year, the project results were strengthened through the contribution of 14 CSO grantees, and more than 1,500 households were supported with psycho-social support, while social services and referrals were tailored to a range of municipal services. Extensive data collection and needs assessment in urban and rural areas of households affected in the partner municipalities produced a database of more than 2,000 households assisted collectively.

In all, more than 15 initiatives to support volunteering mechanisms and self-help initiatives were implemented to contribute to community resilience and earthquake recovery efforts. These were largely implemented by grantees and completed and handed over to municipalities by June 2023.

Three online platforms (>15,000 users) became fully operational during 2023, raising issues and concerns with municipal authorities, and gathering and distributing resources and coordinating volunteerism in emergency situations. The platforms also served to exchange information among young people on employment and training opportunities.

A protocol for social service providers and emergency social plans were put into operation by the municipalities of Durres, Kruje and Shijak, aiming to improve the level of preparedness and response in emergency situations. A final multistakeholder conference—On the Road to Resilient Communities— took place with the dissemination of results and generation of recommendations on follow-up actions following project closure.

CHILD PROTECTION

During 2023, UNICEF continued to provide adequate resources to increase the capacities of the child protection system and to define clearly the workforce roles and responsibilities for providing an improved coordination of social care provision at the local level. Multi-level support enabled interventions are provided to people affected by the emergency and by the respective national protection system, tackling improvements needed to the regulatory framework, evidence generation, technical assistance to key institutions (MoHSP, SACRP, State Social Service, Adoption Committee, municipalities and the NHRIs), as well as enhanced access to emergency protection systems.

This approach enabled people in urgent need to receive timely and quality services while strengthening the statutory workforce’s overall higher level of professional preparedness and response abilities.

Continuous support to the National

De-institutionalisation Plan 2020–2023 resulted in:

- Piloting of the Child and Family Support Hub in two additional municipalities (Durres and Tirane)
- Approval of the transformation plan of RCIs in family-based community services based in Korce and Vlore
- Exchange of experiences and direct support for services including home visits and parenting classes
- Psychological counselling provided for 70 children and their biological families identified at high risk of institutionalisation or already in residential care
- Dedicated training provided to 75 frontline professionals.

At the policy level, development of the new Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 was supported, including a dedicated specific objective to advance the de-institutionalisation process. Strong advocacy from UNICEF led to inclusion of this vital reform as a priority in the roadmap that the government drafted in the framework of EU accession preparedness. This intervention stream has contributed directly to acceleration of results towards SDGs 5.2 and 16.2.

22. Link to the Ombudsperson’s recommendations: [Rekomandime-mbi-sistemin-e-mbrojtjes-se-femijeve-dhe-garantimin-e-te-drejtave-te-tyre-ne-zonat-ge-u-preken-nga-termeti-i-vitit-2019-ne-Shqiper.pdf \(smpdf.org\)](#); [Rekomandime-mbi-sistemin-e-mbrojtjes-se-femijeve-dhe-garantimin-e-te-drejtave-te-tyre-ne-zonat-ge-u-preken-nga-termeti-i-vitit-2019-ne-Shqiperi.pdf \(smpdf.org\)](#)

UNICEF’s support to SACRP enabled this critical institution to develop a set of quality criteria for service provision by the statutory child protection workforce and the respective monitoring methodology, which was drafted in consultation with various stakeholders and piloted in Berat, Diber, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Sarande, Shkoder, Tirane and Vlore. The package was finalised and approved by the Minister of Health and Social Protection. This work significantly improves the government’s ability to better monitor the services and performances of the child protection workers across the country. Both intervention streams contributed directly to acceleration of results towards SDG 16.2.

To improve prevention and protection measures in ensuring that all children are protected from severe forms of abuse and are not revictimised, and supported with multi-sectoral child-friendly services, UNICEF continued to support the engagement of professionals. These skilled people are able to provide specialised services through support provided in the One-Stop Centres in Fier and Shkoder to child victims of sexual abuse and severe forms of violence. Additional investment in evidence generation was made through finalising the survey Knowledge attitudes and behaviours towards violence against children in Albania, which will enable various actors to shape their programmes in relation to behaviour change towards VAC identification and reporting. Both intervention streams contributed directly to acceleration of results towards SDG 16.2.

UNICEF supported NHRIs in their monitoring roles of the public administration and their actions or inactions in guaranteeing child rights in the earthquake-affected areas. With UNICEF technical assistance, the Ombudsperson, particularly the section headed by the Commissioner on Child Rights Promotion and Protection, developed monitoring tools, set out to the affected municipalities to meet with various local stakeholders and observed on the ground the measures taken by the authorities. The People’s Advocate also noted the remaining challenges of child rights in the light of the stressful situation caused by the earthquakes. These actions resulted in two sets of comprehensive recommendations²² issued to the municipalities of Kamez and Lezhe on the rights of the child to protection from violence, adequate housing,

education and healthcare. The tools developed and the skills gained (including a sharp eye on particular vulnerabilities of some children with regard to disabilities, gender, ethnicity) will help this NHRI in future monitoring exercises following potential natural disasters, including those related to climate change.

In 2023, UNICEF supported the Ombudsperson in taking some of the above recommendations, providing remedies for children with disabilities and developing a caselaw brochure in child-friendly language and enriched with attractive illustrations. The brochure and the case stories were launched during the 16 days of activism against VAWG on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The information materials and outreach activities are key to building demand of children for remedies provided by the NHRIs and their trust in these institutions.

As a result, both the number of complaints brought by children to the Ombudsperson and the overall number of child rights violation cases handled by the NHRIs increased. Although the National De-institutionalisation Plan 2020–2023 marked a major achievement for Albania, the reform remains a sensitive and often politicised matter, especially the issue of the transformation of residential care institutions. Yet, UNICEF efforts and persistence to work in parallel with central and local governments brought a successful piloting process in two municipalities resulting in the expansion of one of the models of alternative care in 2023 into two additional municipalities and already support has been provided for the reunification of 70 children. While NHRIs have consolidated their role over these years, their financial and human resources, as well as donor attention to their institutional strengthening, are limited. There is a need to continue investing in these institutions until a culture of demand and accountability for child rights is built.

GENDER EQUALITY

Women's resilience was supported and strengthened across the municipalities hit worst by the 2019 earthquakes and institutional capacities were built across these municipalities, contributing to SDG targets 5.1 and 11.b.2. In 2023, the following results were achieved:

- Increased availability of public evidence and data on women's economic empowerment.

Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) Reports were developed and disseminated to the ten targeted municipalities. Twenty women benefited from increased capacities in developing joint marketing, branding and promotion of products, and their presence and importance in the value chains was enhanced. The intervention effectively promoted artisanal products through the establishment of two artisan centres. The creation of the local brand *Kruja Artizanale* and establishment of its website further solidifies these efforts. Across the project, 134 women benefited in the seven targeted areas through the value chain interventions. Partnership with non-traditional stakeholders, including the private sector, was essential for achieving these results.

- Following up on previous work and the official adoption and introduction into the extra-curricular programmes of Albanian public schools, in partnership with the Minister for Youth and Children and MoES, UN Women successfully initiated the piloting of the Empowerment through Self Defence (ESD) approach in 56 schools. To support the roll-out of the programme, an initial pool of 56 teachers from 56 public schools was enrolled in the ESD instructors training cycle. The teachers completed their training in January 2023 and started applying the methodology in their schools, as part of the extra-curricular classes.
- UN Women has supported the finalisation of the National Strategy on DRR and ensured a good level of gender mainstreaming across the strategy objectives. The UN also increased the availability of evidence and knowledge of the linkages between GE and DRR. A gender-responsive practical manual was developed for strengthening resilience and gender mainstreaming in local DRR plans, which were distributed to all 61 municipalities in Albania.

This effort not only increased knowledge for CSOs and municipalities but also fostered connections between them and vulnerable groups. Specifically, local community groups in Fushe-Kruje and Vore, involving women, girls, local government representatives, CSOs and schools now have enhanced understanding of gender-based approaches in DRR actions.

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

The project Strengthen capacities of the Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service (AFPRS) has been instrumental in enhancing the operational capabilities of several municipal fire protection and rescue services. Such enhancement aligns with SDGs 11 and 13, focusing on, respectively, sustainable cities and communities, and climate action.

The primary objective of the support is to modernise and enhance the service, to be achieved by strengthening the operational and human capabilities for improved prevention and response through targeted support to the service at the municipal level. The assistance benefits the firefighter teams across ten Albanian municipalities, representing 45 percent of the country's total population. The municipalities benefiting from this initiative include Durres, Fier, Kamez, Kavaje, Kruje, Kurbin, Lezhe, Pogradec, Shijak and Tirane. In terms of environmental impact, the support provided contributes to increasing the resilience of the targeted communities and territories through enhanced capacities to counter the effects of fires in urban areas, industries and forests, as well as other disasters and incidents.

Key results archived include:

- Delivery of three fully equipped Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) containers to the municipalities of Durres, Fier and Lezhe, resulting directly in a substantial enhancement of the operational capabilities of the municipal firefighters, enabling them to respond more effectively to emergencies.
- A total of 377 firefighters have been trained in a programme approved by the General Directorate of AFPRS. The training, initially targeting firefighters from ten project municipalities, has been extended to include personnel from an additional 16 municipalities.
- Progress in infrastructure development is also on course, with the construction of a new fire station in Fier Municipality currently under way. By the end of 2023, the construction work was 33 percent complete and on track for completion by May 2024. Once operational, this new fire station will significantly improve the safety and working conditions of the municipal firefighters.

ALBANIA SDG ACCELERATION FUND PHASE II LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND 2 (LNB2)

OUTCOME 1 HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

During the reporting period the aim of the LNB2 programme was to further improve orientation of the results by scaling up the social protection and inclusion reform roll-out and increasing capacities of local government to provide decentralised services for women, children and men in their communities. The participating agencies of the LNB2 programme (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA) have further strengthened the partnership with strategic government partners and other institutions, working closely with them to coordinate and implement interventions and ensure that vulnerable groups are supported holistically. Using a systemic approach, LNB2 contributed to capacity building and organisational development of national and local government structures and service providers, including CSOs, in an ongoing process to consolidate results achieved and disseminate best practices. To this end LNB2's institutional partnerships at central and local levels were further strengthened and continuous consultation mechanisms established to support the transfer of results to be embedded in the government partners' structures.

Under Outcome 1,²³ LNB2 focused on: i) empowering women and disadvantaged communities, including PwD and R&E, to demand and access services and increase their participation in decision-making processes; ii) increasing capacities of CSOs in their advocacy and service provision roles; iii) offering tested inclusive services, including those targeting women and girls, as well as inclusive education, services for the elderly, and healthcare in several municipalities; iv) supporting municipalities to establish and fund innovative social service delivery; and v) improving systems of collaboration among local mechanisms in the areas of child protection, healthcare and social services.

Concrete results include the following:

- 8,600 R&E benefited from a tailored package of integrated social service, home visits and community-based services on SRH.
- 5,240 children and youth with disabilities and their families benefited from capacity building

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

- of assistant teachers and improved community-based social services.
- 1,220 old people benefited from social services recently established in the target areas.
- 3,750 vulnerable women benefited from local-level social and health services.
- 3,700 vulnerable youth benefited from vocational training courses, employment and community-based health and care services.
- 11,900 vulnerable children benefited from capacity building in inclusive school policies of teachers, headmasters and psychologists.
- 10 Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) received grants and are implementing 12 actions.
- Prizma network of women organisations facilitated a community practice on Public Consultation Law, Public Procurement Law and Social Services Law.
- 13 students are attending an 18 month course on sign language interpretation.

Under Outcome 2,²⁴ LNB2 strengthened its collaboration with 32 municipalities towards: i) supporting their staff to assess and improve social planning, including in the area of social housing, services for the elderly and from a GE perspective; ii) strengthening capacities of local service providers in areas related to the Integrated Social Service Model, disability assessment reform and service provision for PwD through community centres; and iii) facilitating support mechanisms for exchange of experience and learning among providers of social services of the targeted municipalities, particularly of those serving in community centres for PwD. Concrete results include:

- Improvement of local social planning, with 15 municipalities updating and costing their local social care plans, with strong emphasis on incorporating a gender perspective
- 5 municipalities engaged in a participatory budgeting process for the first time
- 210 health professionals strengthened capacities for integrating health and social services through Universal Progressive Home Visiting (UPHV)
- 360 local professional staff (65% females) with enhanced capacities in social service

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

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

- delivery for vulnerable groups and scholarship mechanisms (60)
- 845 assistant teachers and classroom teachers with enhanced capacities to support students with disabilities
- 15 grants to municipalities provided to set up and maintain new social services for vulnerable individuals and families, benefiting around 5,600 people (mainly elderly, R&E, children with disabilities, and vulnerable families)
- 12 regional forums, covering all 61 municipalities, held on implementation of bio-psycho-social assessments as part of disability reform
- Mapping of social services in Albania and support for development of a national map accessible online.

Under Outcome 3,²⁵ LNB2 has supported national institutions with: i) development and implementation of social inclusion frameworks including the National Youth Strategy and Action Plan, 2022–2029 (approved), draft Social Inclusion Policy Document 2022–2026 (finalised) and the draft of the new Social Protection Strategy with a strong gender component; ii) development of digital mapping of social care services; iii) operationalisation of the Social Fund; iv) development of monitoring mechanisms of social inclusion frameworks and increasing capacities at the local level on disaggregated data collection and use of gender statistics; v) support to institutional development of Directorate of Inspection of Social Services Standards to implement quality inspection and monitoring systems and support on the EU negotiation process on Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment; and vi) support capacities of universities and ASCAP in development of the continuing education and qualification system, training curricula and standards on inclusive and gender sensitive education programmes. Concrete results include the following:

Supporting policy development

- Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030
- Social Inclusion Policy Document 2023–2027
- Progress Report on implementation of NAP for Older Persons 2020–2022
- Amendment of Law 22/2018 on Social Housing approved

- State periodic progress report on implementation of the CRPD
- Alternative report on implementation of the CRPD
- A report analysing the existing legal framework of the Social Fund and its functioning
- A comparative study on international sign language interpretation services.

Strengthening capacities of central institutions

- Support for the Department of Social Work and Policies at Tirana University to develop two masters curricula
- Bootcamp for Master of Social Work programme students, aiming to empower them towards equality, diversity and inclusion
- Partnership with the 3 faculties of Social Sciences in enhancing scientific research, refining internship programmes and developing updated curricula for social work students
- Support to ASCAP to empower assistant teachers to professionally support students with disabilities: 3 modules accredited
- Support INSTAT on Child, Youth and Adolescence indicators.

LNB2 with its support at the community, municipality and policy levels and close partnership with authorities, CSOs and donors is contributing to Albania's progress in achieving the SDGs, particularly SDGs 1–5 (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, GE), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDGs 16&17 (peaceful and inclusive societies, global partnership). Specific examples of this contribution include:

- SDG 1 Poverty eradication (Targets 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) and SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, through activities that offer integrated social services and empower disadvantaged communities; adoption of inclusive social care planning at the central and local levels, such as the development of the strategies on social inclusion and social protection, national strategies on ageing and youth, improvement and implementation of the legislation on social housing, improvement of the Social Fund, and others
- SDG 3 Good health and nutrition (target 3.8), through support for implementation of UPHV taking a holistic approach for child health and development, focusing on the most vulnerable groups and contributing to the quality of care of maternal and child health services

- SDG 4 Quality education (targets 4.1 and 4.b), through support to inclusive education, including reduction in drop-out of students from school and efforts to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- SDG 5 Gender equalities through targeted and integrated interventions that ensure women and girls have equal access to services and participate actively in empowerment project activities
- SDG 10 Reduced inequalities (targets 10.2, 10.3) through activities that aim to empower and ensure equal access to services for PwD
- SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals through activities aiming at building a wide partnership with national and local level institutions, academia and CSOs towards advancing the agenda on social inclusion.

Both results and challenges from this joint programme contribute to strengthen discussion and evidence serving the country's higher level coordination, or thematic or sectoral I. The programme also plays an important role in promoting SDG progress within Albania's policy processes and dialogue.

SDG4BUSINESS

OUTCOME 2 GREEN GROWTH, INNOVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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

[Business Partnerships & Solutions for Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) is a UNJP that prepares and trains Albanian businesses for implementation of the SDGs in their business models. The activities are focused on two main sectors—agro-processing, and textile, clothing, leather and footwear (TCLF)—both selected for their significant economic impact on the country's overall economic performance and employment. The project is implemented jointly by the specialised UN agencies FAO, ILO, UNDP and UNIDO. Through this UNJP, UN's work on the private sector in Albania was successfully boosted in 2023 with increasing awareness of SDGs-positive business practices and sector reviews for both targeted sectors. Two major documents per sector in Albania were prepared in consultation with stakeholders, as follows:

- [SDG principles and positive practices adopted by the TCLF sector](#)
- [Stocktaking Report: Qualitative assessment of the SDGs principles and positive practices adopted by the main actors in the agro-processing sector](#)
- [Zero Roadmap of SDGs and European Green Deal adoption in the agro-processing sector](#)
- Zero Draft Roadmap for the SDGs & EU Green Agenda in the TCLF sector.

Regarding the aim of making private sector businesses aware of Economic, Social and Governance benefits of adopting SDG principles and practices, an array of consultations, roundtables and trainings (e.g., [SCORE](#) and [RECP](#)) were undertaken in both the agro-processing and TCLF sectors. Stakeholder consultations were held with more than 50 government, businesses and academia representatives in groups and individually collecting opinions and contributions on the sector analysis.

Based on the consultations and the above-mentioned Stocktaking Report, a Zero Roadmap for the TCLF sector in Albania was developed. Twenty-one companies of clothing, leather and footwear received tailored support for the introduction of resource efficiency, increase in productivity and improvement of the health and safety of their workforce. Six RECP business cases were published, and two videos produced to promote relevant resource efficient business practices. Two study tours were organised in spring to familiarise 25 experts from TCLF business and expert communities with top notch (vertical) experience of TCLF Swedish businesses and research community, as well as the (horizontal) experience of Tunisian companies and lead associations in fulfilling the obligations of the EU Green Deal using best SDGs-related practices for their production and waste management activities.

In total, six companies were visited in the textile centre of Sweden (Boros) and five professors engaged in sharing the experience of national and international textile pioneers hosted by the region in high-tech production and research activities. Close ties were established with both Boros University and the Tunisian Association of Textile Producers, the latter of which introduced the experience of five textile enterprises, including the largest producer of jeans in the region. The tour participants explored potential services and equipment they could consider introducing in Albania

through exchange of experiences and practices together with their Tunisian counterparts. In the agro-processing sector, 30 highly representative companies from six different agro-processing sub-sectors—meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables, flour and bread, olive oil, and bottled water—participated in the FGDs, from which five participated also in key informant interviews (KIIs) in December 2022 and January 2023. The current status of their business models was assessed and SDGs principles and EU Green Agenda introduced to familiarise the concepts and improve the understanding of the representatives of incorporating and implementing such concepts into the business model. Based on the FGDs and KIIs, the Stocktaking Report and Zero Roadmap for the agro-processing sector in Albania were developed. Awareness of the issue of applying SDGs for the benefit of Albanian businesses was raised through the organisation and execution of two highly visible activities in 2023: [Business #2030 Conference](#) and [SDG Business Pioneers Award](#).

The [Business #2030 Conference](#), a two-day event, witnessed 250+ participants and 57 speakers. The conference also emphasised the link with Sweden and drew upon the expertise of nine Swedish speakers and 12 Swedish businesses. The conference also organised a side B2B meeting with Swedish businesses with the participation of ten enterprises. The [SDG Business Pioneers Award](#) received 63 applications, with a winner and two finalists announced for each category: micro, small, medium, large and international. The award ceremony captured considerable [media attention](#), with major [news channels](#) featuring coverage.

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALBANIA PHASE II

OUTCOME 4 GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

During the reporting year, the UN Joint Programme Ending Violence Against Women in Albania Phase II, generously supported by Sida and implemented by UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA, achieved significant results. UN agencies collectively advanced efforts to prevent and respond to VAW, enhancing prevention, protection and policy advice on EVAW in the country and contributing to achievement of SDG target 5.2. The programme has led to stronger institutional commitment to implement laws and policies to

address VAW and better align them with international standards. The intervention supported engagement of the government and partner CSOs with human rights mechanisms such as the CEDAW Committee, and GREVIO. Notably, the recently issued CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations include several important recommendations pertaining to EVAW, including the need to urgently amend the definition of sexual violence in the criminal code and align it with the Istanbul Convention. This and other recommendations were the result of sustained advocacy efforts by UN and partner CSOs supported through the project and will ensure that any upcoming update to the legal and policy framework on EVAW will be aligned more with international standards. Efforts were initiated to establish a Femicide Watch in Albania, providing technical support to the Ombudsperson. Non-traditional partners are increasingly engaged to prevent VAW with more than 1,100 men and boys engaged in awareness-raising efforts to combat GBV, including through the strengthening of the Be a Man Club initiative, which this year expanded to 11 clubs across Albania.

During the 16 Days Campaign to End Gender-based Violence, 38 private companies amplified the campaign's messages on ATMs, pharmacies, shopping malls, sports clubs and dedicated radio spots and media appearances. FBOs also increased their formal commitment to contribute to the functionality of the CRM and signed formal agreements in Pogradec and Vlore municipalities. Young people, especially young men and boys were engaged through specific awareness-raising activities including in schools. Overall, UN increased the visibility of messages around EVAW: during the 16 Days Campaign UN amplified key messages on prevention and response to GBV and reached more than 200,000 people on social media and 2,400 people through in-person activities, featuring some 180 events of which at least 61 supported by the UN JP EVAWIA II.

At least 11 media reports on VAW were published following UN support, including through organisation of a dedicated media forum aiming to increase awareness among journalists of VAW and services

provided to survivors, highlighting the role of the media in the reporting of such cases.

UN supported an improved institutional response to ending VAWG. Preliminary data for 2023 provided by MoHSP show that 5,064 cases of violence were reported, 2,730 Protection Orders or Immediate Protection Orders were released (counting for 53.9% of the total cases reported), and 1,911 cases were referred to the prosecutor (26.4% of the total cases reported and 70% of the cases that were accompanied by a protection order). 621 cases of violence were addressed through the online registering and tracking system of GBV cases (REVALB), an increase from 2022 (550 cases). Considerable support has been provided to strengthening the capacities of the CRMs, ensuring a more cohesive and effective approach to responding to and addressing VAW cases.

A third analysis of the functioning of the CRM of cases of domestic violence at the local level was initiated in 2023 to examine progress, identify best practices and ultimately provide recommendations to overcome the challenges for the CRMs. Some 345 professionals and members of the CRMs increased their capacities to handle and refer cases of violence through UN support, including health services, teachers, police officers and local domestic violence coordinators in 31 municipalities.

The Network of Coordinators for Domestic Violence has been strengthened to serve as a platform for communication among members, enhancing the capacity of coordinators to effectively manage survivors of various forms of violence. The support includes fostering collaboration and facilitating the sharing of best practices. Some 426 people (of which 416 women) received services through the intervention, including legal aid, psychological support and reintegration services in 24 municipalities²⁶.

Support to survivors has been provided by the 16 CSOs²⁷ engaged through the project, in coordination with municipalities, which play an essential role in identifying and addressing cases of violence and raising awareness of this issue.

26. Berat, Kukove, Polican, Dimal, Skrapar, Durres, Cerrik, Elbasan, Gramsh, Librazhd, Peqin, Prrenjas, Fier, Lushnje, Has, Fushe-Arrez, Malesi e Madhe, Puke, Vau I Dejes, Kamez, Tirana, Vlore.

27. CSOs engaged by the programme as of December 2023 are: Centre for Legal and Civic Initiative; Different and Equal; Woman to Woman; Vatra; Tjeter Vizion; Women Forum Elbasan; Human Rights in Democracy Centre; Shelter Edlira Haxhiymeri; Association Gender, Peace and Security; Albanian Human Rights Group; Youth Voice Network; Act for Society; ESD Albania; Awa-Albanian Women in Audiovisual; National Centre for Community Services (NCCS); ACPD.

ANNEX B

Cooperation Framework Indicators

GOVERNMENT OF ALBANIA AND UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK, 2022-2026

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

This priority Integrates quality, inclusive 21st C. education and learning readiness; Effective and inclusive health care and services and social protection within a strategic UN system approach to sustain investment in people – especially vulnerable groups⁴ - as part of COVID-19 response and recovery and EU accession

IMPACT

National development priorities: NSDI II pillar 3. Investing in human capital and social cohesion

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023. 2.3.6 Education and skills; 2.3.8 Social protection and inclusion, including healthcare

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approximation to EU *acquis* chapters: 19, 26, 28, 23, 24

REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

European Green Deal⁵; Europe 2020 Strategy; European Pillar of Social Rights⁶; other.

SDGs and targets: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.7, 4.c, 5.1, 5.2, 5.6, 10.2, 10.3, 10.7, 11.1

OUTCOME 1. BY 2026 THERE IS INCREASED AND MORE EQUITABLE INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE, REMOVING BARRIERS AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE AT RISK OF EXCLUSION⁷

Indicators	All indicators Baseline, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2023; annual	Source	Status (end-December 2023)
% of total government spending on essential services as a proportion of total government spending (T) and GDP: i) education; ii) health; iii) social protection; iv) adequate housing	i) T: 11.4; GDP: 3.3 ii) T: 10; GDP: 2.99 iii) T: 32.5; GDP: 9.5 iv) T: 1.8; GDP: 0.05	i)–iv) T, GDP: greater than baseline value	INSTAT MoFE GoA Housing Department Global Health Expenditure Database (who.int)	i) T: 11.4; GDP: 3.3 ii) T: 10; GDP: 3 iii) GDP: 9.6 iv) T: 1.8; GDP: 0.05
Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio in pre-primary education (children 3–6 years), disaggregated by sex ⁸ (SDG 4.2.2)	T: 79.9 M: 81.9 F: 77.9	Increase by 5pp	INSTAT	82.9 (M: 84.3; F: 81.5)
Average PISA score of 15-year-old students, in reading, mathematics, and science, disaggregated by sex (SDG 4.1.1 ⁹ , proxy)	Reading: T: 405; M: 387; F: 425 Maths: T: 437; M: 435; F: 440 Science: T: 417; M: 409; F: 425	Reading: 410 Maths: 437 Science: 422	PISA, Albania	Reading 358; Math 368 points compared; Science 376
Coverage of essential health services (UHC; SDG 3.8.1 ¹⁰); proportion of children under 1 year that received measles vaccine (SDG 3.2.1)	64% 94%	65–70% >95%	WHO–GHO UHC report INSTAT MoHSP	UHC Service Coverage Index (2021): 64 Coverage with measles containing vaccine (MMR) 1st dose: 85,7% (2022 data - data for 2023 will become available after April 2024)

4. For example: 'Albania's social care and protection systems insufficiently protect people against poverty shocks, and still struggle to help the poor find sustainably productive pathways. Investments in education, health care and social protection as a share of GDP are below EU averages' (CCA 6).

5. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal>

6. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en

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

8. Data will be available at municipal level following Census 2022.

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

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

Indicators	All indicators Baseline, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2023; annual	Source	Status (end-December 2023)
Out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure on health	44.5%	35–40%	WHO–GHO INSTAT MoHSP Global Health Expenditure Database (who.int)	59.7% (2021)
% of infants under 6 months exclusively fed with breast milk (àSDG 2.2.1, 2.2.2.)	37%	>40%	INSTAT MoHSP (Demographic and Health Survey, DHS–MICS)	37% (DHS 2017-2018)
Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women in the age group 15–19 years	14.2	11	INSTAT	12.1 (2021)
Country Preparedness index & Operational readiness index to respond to pandemics ¹¹ (SDG 3.8.1; 3.d.1) (Level 1, <=30; Level 2, <=50%; Level 3, <=70%; Level 4, <=90%; Level 5, > 90%)	73%	75%	WHO–SPAR ¹²	91% (2022)
Number of i) households, ii) PwD, and iii) percentage of refugees and persons granted temporary protection covered by social protection system (SDG 1.3.1)	i. 66,269 ii. 72,711 iii. 2.3%	i. 65,000 ii. 70,000 iii.1.5%	MoHSP UNHCR	i. 63,714 ii. 71,443 iii.1
Socio-economic gaps between Roma and non-Roma, by sex (reflected in employment, registration, and access to services)	Employment NR: 27%; R: 18%; RF:11% Possession of ID NR: 97%; R: 90%; RF:91% Youth (18–24) NEET NR: 42%; R: 78%; RF:90% Use of preventive healthcare NR: 68%; R: 44%; RF:49%	Gap decreased by at least 2%	Regional Roma Survey	No change from Baseline Survey will be conducted in 2024
No. of children in residential care at end of the year, per 100,000 population age 0–17 years, by sex	T: 96.6 M: 98.4 F: 94.6	T: 50 M: 51 F: 49	State Social Services INSTAT	Data for 2023 will be available starting from March 2024.
No. of visits on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health at PHC level	1,000,285 annually (15% of total visits to PHC)	Greater than baseline value	UNFPA reports	1,265,249 (INSTAT, 2022)

11. This indicator measures the level of preparedness and operational readiness based on the implementation of IHR capacities.

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

OUTPUT 1.1 - SOCIAL PROTECTION: Social protection systems and mechanisms are strengthened to increase the coverage, quality, and monitoring of cash benefits and social care services and affordable housing for vulnerable groups.

Indicators	All indicators Baseline, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2023; annual	Source	Status (end-December 2023)
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 1.1 No. of new or revised national social protection policies to extend coverage, enhance comprehensiveness and/or increase adequacy of benefits, with UN support ¹³	2022: 0	2023: 4		4 (UNICEF: 2 UNW: 2)
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 1.4 No. of people accessing basic services, with UN support ¹⁴	2022: 36,364	2023: 43,900	MoHSP Website, Reports UN Reports INSTAT MoHSP Website, Reports UN Reports INSTAT	46,301 (UNDP: 20,312 UNW 700 vulnerable women UNICEF: 25,000 UNHCR: 289) UNICEF- Score: 2
National government measurement of child poverty using multidimensional measures	Score 1 (none)	2022: Score 1 2023: Score 1	MoHSP Website, Reports UN Reports INSTAT	UNICEF- Score: 2
% of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings officials who report improved victim-centred approach in their unit attributable to activities under this outcome	0	2022: 75% 2023: 80%		80%
% of targeted childcare professionals, caregivers, relevant frontline workers in selected municipalities with improved knowledge and skills to provide alternative care	0	2022: 30% 2023: 50% 2024: 80%		50%

OUTPUT 1.2 - EDUCATION: Education institutions have improved policy, digital knowledge, infrastructure, tools, and budgets to offer inclusive learning and 21st century skills¹⁵ to boys and girls and especially vulnerable groups (all education levels and including in emergencies)

No. of students and teachers benefiting from better education services provided by repaired or reconstructed education facilities	7,400	2022: 18,000 2023: 25,000		15,341
Coverage of schools providing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)	70%	2022: 80% 2023: 85%		85%
Scope and degree of digital learning ecosystems at primary and secondary level	2 initiating	2022: 3 established 2023: 3 established	UN and partners reports and PISA results	3 established
Performance in PISA	Reading, 405; Maths, 437; Science, 417	PISA 2022–2023: Reading (410), Maths (457), Science (422)		Reading, 358; Maths 368 points compared; Science 376
Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education	55%	60%		64.23% (simulated based on the latest UNESCO/UIS data and it will be updated once the new data will be released for 2023 in March 2024)

13. UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women report on this indicator. The baseline for 2022 is zero.

14. UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR and UNICEF report on this indicator. The baseline for 2022 is 35,664 reported from: UNDP, 13,750 vulnerable people access to basic services and 21,914 vulnerable families' access to Social Housing Programmes; UNHCR, 200; UN Women, 500 vulnerable women and girls; UNICEF, N/A.

15. 21st century transversal skills (e.g. communication, team work and networking, critical thinking and problem solving, initiative and resilience) and deep skills in one or more trades e.g. ICT, boilermakers, millwrights, welders. EC, Skills for Industry Strategy 2030, 2019. See also; ILO, [Skill-up](#), dtd Nov 2019; AES, [What are 21st century skills](#), dtd 2020.

Indicators	All indicators Baseline, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2023; annual	Source	Status (end-December 2023)
Education infrastructure facilities repaired or reconstructed	63 education facilities repaired or reconstruction	2022: 36 education facilities 2023: 60 education facilities 2024: 67 education facilities	UN and partners reports and PISA results	52 education facilities completed
Tools (furniture, laboratories)	63 education facilities furnished 41 education facilities with laboratories	2022: 36 education facilities furnished 2023: 60 education facilities furnished 2024: 67 education facilities furnished		52 education facilities furnished 33 education facilities with laboratories
IT laboratories	41 education facilities with IT laboratories	2022: 23 education facilities with laboratories 2023: 38 education facilities with IT laboratories 2024: 44 education facilities with laboratories		32 education facilities with IT laboratories
Digital knowledge (assessment of teachers' needs on IT and digital literacy and online training platform)	No	2022: Yes 2023: Yes		Yes
OUTPUT 1.3 - HEALTH CARE: The health system has increased capacities to achieve SDG 3 and UHC targets, providing quality people-centred services ¹⁶ at an affordable cost, including during emergencies, and improving the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.				
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 2.3				
No. of governmental and non-governmental institutions having increased capacity to design, implement and fund policies preventing and reducing malnutrition and promoting healthy diets, with UN support ¹⁷	2022: 0	2023: 4		5
No. of healthcare institutions that have conducted self-assessment on the compliance to approved Quality of Care Standards	41 (11 hospitals and 30 PHC centres)	2022: 4 university hospitals, 11 regional hospitals, 19 municipality hospitals, 225 PHC centres, 2 non-public health clinics. 2026: 96 (16 hospitals and 80 PHC centres)		tbc
No. of neonatal intensive care units applying or implementing quality standards for neonatal care	0	2022: 0 2023: 1 2026: 3	UN project reports MoHSP and other institutions reports	2 (Fier, Elbasan)
% of health providers providing home visiting services with adequate skills to effectively engage with parents and promote nurturing care, gender socialization, early detection and intervention for children with developmental risks, delays or disabilities	0	2022: 7% 2023: 23% 2026: 70%		25%
No. of regions with modelling of a non-obesogenic environment for children in place in schools	0	2022: 0 2023: 1 2026: 3		2 (Tirana, Elbasan)
Contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods	4%	2022–2023: N/A (indicator measured only through DHS) 2026: increased by 30%		N/A (indicator measured only through DHS)
Unmet need for family planning for all women 15–49 years of age	12%	2022–2023: N/A (indicator measured only through DHS) 2026: 7%		N/A (indicator measured only through DHS)
% of people from most vulnerable and marginalised groups who do not use primary healthcare, though needing the services	30% women, 76% Roma and Egyptian communities, 58% poor individuals	2022–2023: NA (Indicator measured only through studies) 2026: Reduction by 10%		To be measured through future studies

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

17. UNICEF reports on this indicator. Baseline for 2022 is zero.

Indicators	All indicators Baseline, 2021 Output Indicator Framework B, 2022	Outcome Target, 2026 Output Target, 2023; annual	Source	Status (end-December 2023)
No. of PHC centres that provide quality integrated SRH services accredited by the National Centre for Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions	3	2022–2023: 225 PHC centers accredited 2026: All PHC centers accredited	UN project reports MoHSP and other institutions reports	tbc
No. of women of age 25–65 covered with cervical cancer screening	15,000	2022: 15,000 annually 2023: 7,900 (reported figure from IPH) 2026: 19,500 annually		9232
OUTPUT 1.4 - SHOCK RESPONSIVE SYSTEMS FOR EFFECTIVE DISASTER AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: Health and social protection systems have increased capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies and pandemics and to promote increased community resilience.				
No. of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control	1,900	2022: 600 2023: 100		tbc
Coordination mechanisms and teams on Minimum Initial Service Package implementation established at national and sub-national levels	1	2022: 3 2023: 5		tbc
No. of people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies	5,000 adults; 6,000 children	2022: 25,000 (10,000 adults; 15,000 children)	UN agencies and gov. reports, Handover and acceptance certificates of the MoHSP	2534 individuals (604 F) benefited from distribution of hygiene kits, including 252 infants.
Infrastructure for disease prevention and control upgraded; Infectious Disease Clinic renovated and furnished and masterplan for Institute for Public Health (IPH) developed	No	2022: Infectious disease hospital renovated; IPH masterplan developed; 14 imaging rooms in healthcare facilities equipped with testing & imaging equipment	WHO/Europe Covid-19 vaccine programme monitor (shinyapps.io)	Target achieved by the end of 2022
Covid-19 vaccination coverage (complete regimen)	42% (2 doses)	2022: 45.8% (2 doses); 13.2% (2 doses + booster) 2023: 70% general population (primary series, 2 doses) and 100% high priority groups (primary series + booster) Highest-priority groups for Covid-19 vaccination include older adults, health workers and immunocompromised persons		Sept 2023: Uptake with a complete vaccine series: 44.8% Uptake with first booster dose: 14.1% Uptake with 2 nd booster dose: 2%
OUTPUT 1.5 - INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Communities and CSOs enjoy greater capacities and working mechanisms to participate in planning, service delivery, and monitoring to enhance the quality of services and improve access for vulnerable groups.				
Socio-economic gaps between Roma (R) and non-Roma (NR), by sex (reflected in employment, registration and access to services)	Employment NR: 27%; R: 18%; RF: 11% Possession of ID NR: 97%; R: 90%; RF: 91% Youth (18–24) NEET NR: 42%; R: 78%; RF: 90% Use of preventive health care NR: 68%; R: 44%; RF: 49%	2022: Gap decreased by at least 2% 2023: Gap decreased by at least 1%		Survey will take place during 2024
Enhanced organization of local communities (including vulnerable groups) to articulate their needs and fully benefit from socio-economic opportunities for reconstruction and recovery	NA	2022: 6 small projects (grants provided) to activists and NGOs on social care services after earthquake 2023: N/A	Regional Roma Survey UN reports Government reports Group contract	14 small projects (grants provided) to activists and NGOs on social care services after earthquake
No. of farmers groups and/or community-supported agriculture	0	2022: 3 2023: 0		3 (completed) 3 farmers groups were supported with physical assets (Malesi e madhe: livestock equipment; Belsh: olive processing line; Korca: apple juice processing line)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2. SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Inclusive, resilient economic development and shared prosperity (including effective skills training, decent, formal sector jobs, entrepreneurship, support for green and blue economy transitions and increased production and incomes from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, greater climate and disaster resilience and effective management of natural resources)

IMPACT

National development priorities: NSDI II pillar 2. Economic growth through enhanced competitiveness and innovation; NSDI II, pillar 3: Investing in Human Capital and Social Cohesion; NSDI II pillar 4. Growth through sustainable use of resources (Creating dynamic drivers of growth that generate opportunities and revenue; Strengthening the government's capability to deliver; Managing regional integration, natural hazards and migration)
The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023: 2.3.1 Energy and transport market reform; 2.3.2 Agriculture, industry and services; 2.3.3 Business environment and reduction of informal economy; 2.3.4 R&D, innovation and the digital economy; 2.3.5 Economic Integration Reforms; 2.3.7 Employment and labour markets
National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approximation to EU *acquis* chapters: 2, 11, 12, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Sofia summit (regional cooperation for economy and trade, the digital agenda, research and innovation, connectivity, security, fight against corruption, promoting reconciliation and youth); The clean energy transition declaration (Podgorica); The regional connectivity and roaming agreement (Belgrade); The Roma integration declaration; MoU: 5G for digital transformation in Western Balkans (WB) 2020; MoU: Interoperability and trust services in WB, 2020

SDGs and targets: 1.5, 1.b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.a, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.a, 6.1, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2 7b, 8.3, 8.5, 8.9, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.b, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 11.3, 11.6, 11.b, 12.2, 12.7, 13.2, 15.1, 15.4, 15.b

OUTCOME 2. BY 2026 INNOVATIVE AND INTEGRATED POLICY SOLUTIONS ACCELERATE SUSTAINABLE, PRODUCTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENHANCING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION AND TRANSITION TO A GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMY

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Value of production per ha. of agricultural land (proxy, SDG 2.3.1)	USD 4,056.9	USD 4,868.28	FAO	USD 3889 as of 2022 with exchange rate of 114.94 ALL/USD as per 2022 (latest INSTAT data (2023 data is released in the Q2 2024) ¹⁸ . (Baseline was set in 2021 with the exchange rate 109.95 ALL/USD)
Labour force participation rates, by sex, age (SDG 8.5.2; 8.6.1) ¹⁹	T: 69.6; M: 77.6; F: 61.6 YP (15–24) ²⁰ T: 3; M: 43; F: 30	T: 69.7; M: 77.7; F: 61.6 YP (15–24) T: 38; M: 44; F: 31	INSTAT	Annual LFS 2022 T:73.2; M: 80; 66.7 YP (15-24) T: 38.6; M: 43.6; F: 33.8 LFS Q2 2023 (Quarterly Indicators) T: 75.8; M: 81.7; F: 70.2 YP (15-24) T: 39.1; M: 43.5; 34.7
% of NEET youth (age 15–24 years), by sex (SDG 8.6.1)	T: 26; M: 26; F: 25	T: 21.4; M: 21; F: 22	INSTAT	T: 23.3; M: 21.4; F: 25.2
% of youth and adults with at least one ICT skill, by sex and age group (SDG 4.4.1)	Total: 41 M: 22; F: 19 YP (15–24) T: 57; M: 56; F: 58	T: 45; M: 24; F: 21 YP (15–24) T: 60; M: 59; F: 61	INSTAT	N/A
% of informal employment in non-agricultural sectors, by sex (SDG 8.3.1)	T: 30; M: 36; F: 22	T: 27	LFS 2019 (INSTAT)	INSTAT, 2020 T: 29.1; M: 34.1; F: 21.9
Availability of enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change (based on energy efficiency and renewable energy source targets) (SDG 13.2.1)	NDC	Yes	GoA reports UN programme reports	Target already achieved

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

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

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

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
No. of new or amended laws, policies and regulations approved for environmental protection and sustainable green and blue growth ²¹ incorporating GE considerations and sex disaggregated data	3	9	GoA reports, strategies and legal framework UN programme reports	8
Degree of integrated water resources management ²² (SDG 6.5.1)	47 (0–100)	52	UN Water	47 (0–100)
Proportion of the country covered by protected areas and under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (SDG 15.1.2, proxy)	18.5%	23%	National Agency for Protected Areas, MoTE ²³	23%
Availability of i) National DRR strategy and updated national emergency plan, and ii) % of municipalities with DRR strategies in line with the Sendai Framework and incorporating gender equity and child rights considerations and sex disaggregated data ²⁴ (SDG 11.b.1)	i) No ii) 1	i) Yes ii) 5	GoA reports UN programme reports	Yes National risk assessment for 6 types of risks and consolidated report developed: DRR strategy and Action Plan developed and in place; National Civil Emergency Plan, in final stages of approval. Albania became part of EUCPM.
No. of cities implementing green and smart action plans providing access to safe, healthy, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and PwD (SDG 11.7)	4: Durres, Korce, Tirane, Vlore	30	GoA reports UN programme reports	5: Durres, Korce, Tirane, Vlore, Diber
OUTPUT 2.1 - EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: Government institutions have increased capacities to strengthen policies and services that address the skills mismatch and increase labour force participation and decent work, especially for young people, vulnerable groups and the long term unemployed.				
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 4.3 No. of people directly benefiting from improved access to skills and lifelong learning programmes, including for CSE, developed and implemented with UN support ²⁵	2022: 17	2023: 35		UNHCR: 16
No. of Employment Promotion Programmes (EPP) designed and implemented for vulnerable groups	5	2022: 6 (1 new EPP on outsourcing private training) 2023: 7 (1 new EPP on ICM) 2026: 9		8 (1 new EPP on Traineeship in the frame of the YG)
No. of VET providers accredited or in the process of accreditation	0	2022: first 5 public and 1 private VET providers accredited 2023: 10 (4 additional) VET providers accredited	Official Gazette and Annual Progress Reports Minister's Orders published on NAVETQ website and Annual Progress Reports	10 (6 accredited + 4 awaiting the award of the accreditation status by the responsible Ministry)
% of refugees & asylum seekers who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	5%	2022: 30% 2023: 5%		UNHCR: 8%
% of refugees & asylum seekers (working age) who are unemployed	71%	2022: 60% 2023: 50%		UNHCR: 65%
No. of interventions targeting women and young people, with aim of improving their access to the labour market	0 (Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis conducted and ready for use to design interventions during 2022)	2022: at least 4 interventions implemented (5 earthquake: 3 GSVCA and 1 Women in Small Business programme, UN Women) 2023: 2 interventions (earthquake UN Women GSVCA project)		Registration process of 2 LAGs to be finalized in 2024.

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

22. Integrated water resources management is lynchpin of sustainable development policy. MAPS.

23. All protected areas comprise: National Park, 46%; Nature Managed Reserve, 29%; Land/ maritime protected areas, 5%; Resource Reserve/ Multiple Use Area, 4%; Ramsar network of wetlands, 3%; Strict Nature Reserve/Scientific Reserve, 1%; Biosphere reserve, 1%.

24. Minimum standards: UNISDR, [Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines](#) (section 5.6).

25. UNDP and UNHCR report on this indicator. Baseline for 2022 is 17. In October 2022, the Council of Ministers approved a new programme which allows NAES to outsource training provision to private providers which offer short term trainings courses, targeting employed and unemployed jobseekers (DCM no. 646, dated 5.10.2022).

Ethical recruitment standards enforced with Private Employment Agencies (PEAs)	No	2022: Yes 2023: Yes		No
OUTPUT 2.2 - SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMY TRANSITION: Economic policy measures and programmes are designed, piloted, and tracked to promote sustainable, climate resilient, green and blue economic growth and women's economic empowerment with focus on 'building back better'.				
Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 9.2 No. of private sector entities (including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)) that innovated their business practices, by mainstreaming environmental, social or economic sustainability elements, with UN support ²⁶	2022: 63 businesses supported by In Motion and 7 businesses supported SDP	2023: 100 businesses supported		137 (49 In Motion, 8 Growing with Your Business, 80 through grants 'Recraft the Past, Build up the Future')
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 17.1 No. of policies developed or improved for the benefit of MSMEs with business sector input, and promulgated or implemented, with UN support ²⁷	2022: 0	2023: 1		0 Survey conducted
Output Indicator Framework – 17.4 Existence of a national SDG-financing strategy in country developed with UN support ²⁸	2022: No financing strategy in place	2023: Financing strategy approved	Official acceptance of sites, management plans, regular monitoring of grantees UN reports Government reports	INFF DFA and Roadmap completed, with publication pending in Q1/2024. The sector of interest for the Financing Strategy is yet to be determined.
No. of private sector entities exposed to SDG positive business practices	50	2022: 65 2023: 100		150
No. of private sector entities that demonstrate integration of ESG principles and SD into their business models	0	2022: 28 2023: 20		65
No. of sites fully rehabilitated and revitalized employing a 'building back better approach' and accessible to the public	0	2022: 12 2023: 15 (cumulative)		9 (cumulative)
No. of interventions targeting women and young people, with aim of improving their access to the labour market	1	2022: 3 GSVCA completed (2023): At least 4 interventions (2 business skills + 2 LAGs)		5 (1 targeting specifically women and 4 targeting youth)
No. of administrative acts prepared to strengthen producers and businesses competitiveness in domestic and export markets	0	2022: 0 2023: 10		0
OUTPUT 2.3 – INNOVATION: Policies and programme measures are developed to promote digital economy, entrepreneurship and growth of competitive SMEs/SMAEs, and increased spending on R&D				
UNCT Digital Development Country Profile for Albania	0	2022: 1		0
Implementation plan for Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)	0	2022: 1	UNCT Albania Report	1 Adoption of FADN action plan, established FADN working group and FADN unit
FADN system development	0	2022: 0 2023: 1	FAO Report; FADN implementation plan	0 FADN software technical specification developed and RICA1 account created.
No. of policies, programmes or strategies aiming at boosting digital economy that specifically consider WEE	0	2022: 0 2023: 4	UN Women Reports	0

26. UNDP reports on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 63 businesses supported by In Motion and 7 businesses supported SDP.

27. UNDP reports on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is zero.

28. UNDP and UNICEF report on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is no financing strategy in place.

OUTPUT 2.4 - CLIMATE AND ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES²⁹: Planning and coordination mechanisms strengthened for climate change adaptation and mitigation and enhanced environmental management, conservation and protection, ensuring integration of gender equality commitments.

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Output Indicator Framework—SDG 6.2 No. of trans-boundary water bodies in which cooperation and joint management is strengthened with UN support: a) river and lake basins, and b) aquifers ³⁰	2022: 2	2023: 3		3 Sava River Basin, Dinaric Karst aquifer system, Drini River
Output Indicator Framework—7.3 No. of people who, with UN support: a) gained access to clean, affordable, and sustainable energy; and b) benefited from services from clean, affordable and sustainable energy ³¹	2022: 150	2023: 2,124		2,124
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 14.2 Level of implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas, with UN support ³²	2022: 2 3 Plan Adoption/Designation DK National Park (2022): 27,866.95 ha Narta–Vjosa Landscape PA 2022: 39,342.46 ha. KS MPA	2023: 3 4 Implementation and adoptive management DK National Park 2023: 27,866.95 ha. Narta–Vlosa Landscape PA (2023): 39,342.46 ha. KS MPA	METT score (UNDP & NAPA), Fourth National Communication finalized that is gender sensitive, UN and Government reports Site accomplished investments, as well as studies and reports available with project office	3 Proclaimed: DCM no. 155, dated 13.3.2023 Surface: 12,727 ha
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 15.2 Area (ha.) of terrestrial and marine protected areas created or under improved management practices, supported by UN ³³	2022: 80,985 ha. (809.85 km2)	2023: 103,922 ha. (1,039.22 km2)	National Agency for Protected Areas, MoTE (Protected areas comprise: National park, 46%; Nature Managed Reserve, 29%; Land or maritime protected areas, 5%; Resource Reserve or Multiple Use Area, 4%; Ramsar network of wetlands, 3%; Strict Nature Reserve, Scientific Reserve, 1%; Biosphere reserve, 1%)	103,922 ha. (1,039.22 km2)
Fourth Communication to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Biennial Update Report (BUR) in place	Third National Communication No BUR	2022: Both reports submitted to the UNFCCC 2023: 0		Target already achieved 2 submitted in 2022
Strategic adaptation intervention options identified and organized by sector and location, based in the stocktaking report on updated climate vulnerability analysis	NAP Strategy detailing mid-and long-term Common Country Analysis (CCA) action plan not in place	2022: NAP Stocktaking report and capacity assessment and training programme finalized 2023: NAP vulnerability and risk assessment finalized for the 5 priority sectors and adaptation options identified and prioritized		5 priority sectors Tourism and urban development, energy, agriculture and water resources management, transport
No. of innovative good practices for agrobiodiversity conservation promoting local or organic or GI products	0	2022: 3 2023: 6 (cumulative)		3 Based on the national and local dialogues on SFS conducted, Roadmap for 'Transforming Albanian food systems through sustainable agro-tourism' is developed, and smallholder farmers and small businesses in the agritourism sector in Permet supported with capacity building, and 3 good practices and demonstration farms established.

29. Including: Integrated water resources management, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land and forest management

30. UNDP and UNESCO report on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 2.

31. UNDP reports on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 150 persons.

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

33. UNDP reports on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 80,985 ha.

OUTPUT 2.5 – DRR: Policies, capacities and mechanisms enhanced for effective disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response at all levels.

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 13.3 Existence of a national DRR strategy adopted with UN support and implemented by government in line with the Sendai Framework for DRR ³⁴	2022: national risk assessment and DRR strategy completed	2023: National risk assessment for 6 types of risks and consolidated report developed: DRR strategy and Action Plan developed and in place; Ongoing preparation and update of National Civil Emergency Plan, expected to be finalized in first part of 2023		National risk assessment for 6 types of risks and consolidated report developed: DRR strategy and Action Plan developed and in place; National Civil Emergency Plan approved in Dec 2023. Albania became part of EUCPM A gender-responsive practical manual for strengthening resilience in local DRR produced and distributed to all 61 municipalities in Albania
No. of institutions with strengthened capacities to improve provision of essential services, goods and resources for women during and in post-emergency situations	0	2022: 12 (11 municipalities + 1 national institution in 2022, Ministry of Defence) 2023: 12 (11 municipalities + 1 national institution in 2023)	Position paper with recommendations for gender mainstreaming in DRR frameworks NS and Action Plan on DRR Local DRR plans Revised Local Budgets Project documents Media campaign products and visibility records Physical monitoring Handover documents Subnational INFORM risk index results published online	4 municipalities – Kruja, Kavaja, Fushe-Kruja, Vora (UNWOMEN) In Fier prefecture, the preparation of DRR strategic/ planning documents at the regional and local levels directly benefits 298,144 people, including local communities and stakeholders. Lessons learned and best practices from the Fieri region are actively shared with the other 11 prefectures and 55 municipalities nationwide to promote scaling up and continuous improvement.
No. of households restoring agricultural production and dependent livelihoods	50	2022: 34 completed 2023: 0		The beneficiaries (in Tirana, Dures, Lezha, Kruja) received grants to repair/construct barns, purchase equipment, and live animals based on the needs assessment conducted under the project..
No. of institutions involved in improving their system of collection and reporting on disaster damage and loss data in agriculture sector	0	6 (MoARD, NCPA, MoTE, MIA, municipality, INSTAT)	A gender-responsive practical manual for strengthening resilience in local DRR produced and distributed to all 61 municipalities in Albania	6 Trainings on damage and loss assessment methodology conducted (FAO methodology) for those six institutions.
No. of cultural heritage sites retrofitted to withstand disaster shocks	0	2022: 12 2023: 15 (cumulative)		2022: 2 2023: 8
No. of DRM plans prepared for cultural heritage sites	0	2022: 12 2023: 15 (cumulative)		2022: 0 2023: 1
No. of municipalities provided with firefighting equipment or facilities	0	2022–2023: 10: Durres, Fier, Kamez, Kavaje, Kruje, Kurbin, Lezhe, Pogradec, Shijak and Tirane		10
INFORM risk index calculated	0 municipalities, 12 regions	2022: 61 municipalities (in 12 regions) 2023: 61 municipalities (in 12 regions)		Released an update of the subnational INFORM Risk Index for Albania
OUTPUT 2.6 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES: Capacities of urban municipalities increased to implement sustainable development policies and programmes				
No. studies that screen legislation and capacities on unfunded mandates at the local level	N/A	3 studies	Internal documentation, publications	1 study published

34. UNDP reports on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is a national risk assessment and (DRR) strategy completed, in the final stage of approval.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3. EFFECTIVE, PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

This priority is focused on transparent and accountable institutions, delivering quality, inclusive services, enabling rule of law and increased access to justice³⁵, implementing human rights commitments

IMPACT

National development priorities: NSDI fundamental principle - Good Governance, Democracy and Rule of Law; NSDI II pillar 3. Investing in human capital and social cohesion; NSDI II priority: Delivery of innovative, citizen-centered public services (Improving the quality of life and the environment for all; Strengthening governance and the government's capability to deliver)

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023: 2.3.5 Economic Integration Reforms; 2.3.6 Education and skills; 2.3.7 Employment and labour markets; 2.3.8 Social protection and inclusion, including health care

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approximation to EU *acquis* Ch: 5, 10, 22, 23-24, 32

REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

European Agenda on Migration; The Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI)³⁶; Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI)³⁷; Social Agenda 2020 Regional Working Group (SAWG); Multi-annual Action Plan on Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans (MAP REA); other.

SDGs and targets: 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.a, 5.c, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.7, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10, 16.b, 17.18, 17.19

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

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Proportion of population who believe institutional transparency and accountability are satisfactory, by sex, age, disability and population group (disaggregated by central and local level) (SDG 16.6.1, proxy)	Central: T: 35%; A: 35% Local: T: 37%; A: 37%	Central: T: 50%; A: 60% Local: T: 50%; A: 60%	Trust in Governance annual survey (UNDP)	Central: T: 38%; A: 33.6% Local: T: 36.3%, A: 36.4%
Proportion of population who believe there are sufficient opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of public institutions (disaggregated by sex, age group, central and local level) (SDG 16.7.2, proxy)	Central: 28% Local: 39%	Central: 40% Local: 50%	Trust in Governance annual survey (UNDP)	Central: 27.3% (F: 26%, M: 29%) Local: 36.9% (F: 35%, 39%)
Level of implementation of accepted recommendations from UPR and human-rights treaty bodies (rating, 4-point scale: 4, fully implemented; 3, partially; 2, inadequately; 1, not or poorly implemented)	3, Partially implemented	4, Fully implemented	NHRI reports UN reports	All CEDAW COs were accepted. Level of implementation will be assessed in coming years.
No. of human rights complaints registered, by sex (note: effectiveness of remedial action assessed by routine annual programming monitoring with NHRI) ³⁸	T: 1,384 M: 919; F: 338 M&F: 127	(2022) 10% increase annually; reported improvement in remedial actions	INSTAT; NHRI reports UN reports	To be completed in mid February when People's Advocate will process its statistics
Rate of (pre-trial) detention for children (per 100,000 population of age 14–17, disaggregated by sex) (SDG 16.3.2)	T: 12.3 M: 24; F: 0	T: 8	INSTAT; General Department of Prisons, Ministry of Justice	T: 13.8 (latest official data by INSTAT refers to 2021) M: 27; F:0
Extent to which laws, policies and practices relating to migrants, refugees, stateless persons are consistent or aligned with international standards (SDG 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.4.1) (rating, 4-point scale: 4, fully aligned; 3, partially; 2, inadequately; 1, not or poorly aligned)	Migrants: Partial Refugees: Partial Stateless persons: Partial	100% approximation of Albanian migration legislation and policy with EU legal framework and international law and standards	GoA reports IOM reports UNHCR reports	Migrants: Partial Refugees: 67% Stateless persons: 67%
Extent to which measures of Action Plan of the National Strategy on Migration 2019–2022 are implemented	20%	100%	GoA periodic reports on implementation of NSM	No periodic reports on status of implementation
Existence of an approved comprehensive migration policy (Y/N)	No	Yes	DCM on approval of new policy	No To be approved in first quarter of 2024

35. *Access to justice is a basic principle of the rule of law.*

36. marri-rc.org

37. www.rai-see.org

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

World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law index, Civil Justice Sub-factor: 7.2 Civil justice is free of discrimination	0.51	0.56 (Regional; Global avg.)	WJP Rule of Law index	<u>0.48</u>
Proportion of seized assets used for public social purposes ³⁹ (SDG 16.4, proxy)	4 properties confiscated for social use	+12%	GoA reports	

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

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 16.6 No. of people who have access to justice, with UN support ⁴⁰	2022: 2,608	2023: 3,600		7,993 7,437 people (3,148 people benefitted from FLA Centers and 4,289 people benefitted from CSO FLA services) - UNDP 10 collective labour disputes were mediated through the ALDR system – ILO 297 people at risk of statelessness assisted in 2023 – UNHCR 166 children and 43 parents (87M) at risk of trafficking (92 Roma) obtained legal and other services – UNICEF 40 children in conflict/contact with the law (25 boys) - UNICEF
No. of FLA centres established to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice to the most vulnerable women and men	8	2022: 10 2023: 12		Fully achieved for 2023
No. of justice professionals that have been trained in dealing with a) child offenders, b) child victims of crime	50	2022: At least 20 (additional, sex disaggregated) 2023: At least 20 (additional, sex disaggregated)	Ministry of Justice annual report UN programme reports National Labour Council or tripartite meeting report	183 professionals (63M) trained on justice for children for both children in conflict and those in contact with the law.
Existence of specialized justice for children systems, such as capacity building and standards setting within criminal and civil justice systems	3 of 6 criteria met	2022: 2 of 6 criteria met 2023: 2 of 6 criteria met	Monthly statistical report Albanian State Police data and Project reports	3 of 6 criteria met
No. of justice professionals trained in GB–VAW issues	60	2022: 360 (sex disaggregated) 2023: TBD		150 judges were trained on International Labour Standards
Tripartite policy recommendation and roadmap on enhancing access to justice for all workers prepared and adopted by tripartite constituents	No strategy or roadmap in place	2022: Tripartite policy recommendation developed 2023: Tripartite policy recommendation and roadmap adopted		Tripartite policy recommendation and roadmap on enhancing access to justice for all workers adopted
Proportion of PoC (for statelessness) enrolled in National Social Registries	29%	2022: 40% (sex and age disaggregated) 2023: 10%		11% (UNHCR)
Rate of standard-compliant Albanian State Police arms and ammunition storages vs. total	48%	2022: 58% 2023: 65%		51% are compliant to the standards

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

40. UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and UN Women report on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 2,608 people.

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

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
No. of local governments with more efficient and transparent system of funding of CSOs from public sources	12	2022: 18		18
No. of women and men receiving benefits and support from CSOs supported by the action	28,000	2022: 33,500	Formal agreements or MoU and contracts between local governments and CSOs in participating IPA beneficiaries;	33,500
No. of young people (disaggregated by gender) in target group who indicate to have acquired new skills to effectively address hate speech	0	2022: 250 2023: 500	Action field monitoring reports, CSO reports for implementation of projects indicating beneficiaries, statistics and data from beneficiary CSOs; UN project reports and publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 503 young people (341 girls and 162 boys) 100 young people representatives of Local Youth Councils 40 youth representatives of youth fan clubs of Partizani and Tirana Football Clubs
No. of youth engaged in activities that address toxic masculinities, GBV, social cohesion challenges that post positive stories on social media	0	2023: 100		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 young people engaged. 30 young people supported financially to implement projects/ideas Over 25 human stories/short videos promoted

OUTPUT 3.3 – DATA AND EVIDENCE: Cooperation Framework partners have increased capacities to generate quality disaggregated data to strengthen policies and programmes

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) implemented	No	2022: MoU with INSTAT signed 2023: Survey plan agreed		Data gap assessment conducted
No. of data producers and users with strengthened capacities in the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics	15	2022: 0 2023: 3		25
National profiles developed and published annually to inform national priorities on: i) gender equality, ii) children, adolescents, young people's wellbeing, and iii) older persons	Yes	2022: Yes 2023: Yes		Yes
Report on implementation of Agenda 2030 indicators completed (culture 2030 indicators)	0	1 report completed	UN agencies annual reports INSTAT publications	0 1 report shifted to 2025
No. of data collection tools on agri-food sector for improved SDG monitoring	0	2022: 1 2023: 2		0
Availability of data and information on labour migration to inform policy development	No	2022–2023: Yes		Yes
No. of in-depth analyses based on Census 2022 for vulnerable groups prepared	N/A	2022: Census implemented 2023–2026: analysis conducted		Census completed by 2023. Post enumeration survey conducted and census data to be launched by INSTAT in June 2024

OUTPUT 3.4 – PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY SERVICES: Institutions at national and municipal level have enhanced capacities and ‘open-government’ mechanisms to deliver quality services, promote consultation and participation, carry-out integrity planning, fight corruption and organized crime, and strengthen participation of civil society and citizens, in line with good governance principles, the Open Government Partnership, and international standards.

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
No. of municipalities adopting integrity plans as a corruption prevention tool	6	2022: 20 (cumulative) 2023: 23 (cumulative)		23
No. of AUs operating One-Stop Shops for service delivery	15	2022: 250 2023: 20 (cumulative)		Not relevant since May 2022 with the decision to provide services on-line. UNDP focus of assistance shifted in support to the GoA new vision related to Digital Transformation of services at local level.
No. of STAR3 municipalities applying planning and reporting cycle of public consultations	0	2022: 7 2023: 7 (cumulative)		7
Proportion of women and men aware of e-Albania portal	69.1%	2022: 76% 2023: 90% (cumulative)	STAR3 Project Reports, Municipalities Reports, Trust in Governance annual opinion poll (UNDP), Reports from the CCP Coordinator, National statistics	90.7%
No. of multi-disciplinary practitioners with increased knowledge, understanding and capacity to use relevant national and regional tools for conduct effective victim-centred and trauma-informed investigations and prosecutions of TIP	0	2022: 70 2023: 80	Annual report from UN agencies and relevant institutions	80 practitioners participated in 12 national and regional events in 2023.
CCP Unit officials trained to detect illicit goods from examined containers, based on profiling and risk assessment (subject to availability of resources)	2 trainings	2022–2023: At least 3 trainings per year (subject to availability of resources)		7 (0 in 2023 (due to lack of resources; 7 in 2022).
No. of asset recovery knowledge products developed	0	2022–2023: 3		3

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

No. of public hearings organized by Parliament with public institutions and other stakeholders on child and adolescent rights	2	2023: 3 2026: 3 annually	Parliament website, Annual NHRI reports, CRC and UPR recommendations, EU Albania Reports	4
No. of complaints brought by children to independent human rights mechanisms during the year	1	2022: 10 2023: 20 2026: 40		36

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

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 10.3 No. of people who are internally displaced, migrants, refugees or part of the host communities, or communities left or affected populations benefiting from integrated and targeted interventions, including on strengthening social cohesion, with UN support ⁴¹	2022: 8,913	2023: 14,300		10,937 (IOM: 6,630 UNHCR: 4,307)
Existence of coordination and monitoring system in place and functioning	No	2022: Yes 2023: Yes	UN project reports Decision of Council of Ministers on approval of the policy Department of Border and Migration, Albanian State Police reports	No
Border management and readmission frameworks aligned with international standards	No	2022: Yes 2023: Yes	UN project reports Decision of Council of Ministers on approval of the policy Department of Border and Migration, Albanian State Police reports	No
Proportion of refugees and migrants arriving as part of mixed movements who are referred to the asylum procedures	0.8%	2022: 10% 2023: 5%		7%
Proportion of individuals undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal advice or representation	100%	2022: 100% 2023: 100%		100%
Existence of an approved comprehensive migration policy	No	2022: Yes 2023: Yes		No To be approved in first quarter of 2024

41. UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women report on this indicator. Baseline for 2022 is 8,913 people.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3. EFFECTIVE, PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

This priority is focused on transparent and accountable institutions, delivering quality, inclusive services, enabling rule of law and increased access to justice⁴¹, and implementing human rights commitments

IMPACT

National development priorities:

NSDI II: Cross NSDI - Delivery of innovative, citizen-centered public services; NSDI II pillar 3. Investing in human capital and social cohesion The Economic Reform Programme (ERP), 2021-2023: 2.3.5 Economic Integration Reforms; 2.3.6 Education and skills; 2.3.7 Employment and labour markets; 2.3.8 Social protection and inclusion, including health care

National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), 2020-2022: Political Criteria; Economic criteria (human capital); Approximation to EU acquis Ch: 5, 10, 22, 23-24, 32

REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023; EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III); other.

SDGs and targets: 5.1, 5.a, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.7, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10, 16.b, 17.18, 17.19				
OUTCOME 4. BY 2026, GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENS EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION, PROMOTES WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND REDUCES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN				
Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Rate of child victims of criminal offences, per 100,000 child population (0–17 years), last 12 months	T: 203.1 F: 106.9 M: 294.8	20% decrease	INSTAT / Ministry of Interior	6.7 (INSTAT)
Proportion of children 1–14 years who experienced any physical punishment or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month, disaggregated by sex and age group (SDG 16.2.1)	Total: 47.5% 2–4 years: 43% 5–9 years: 51% 10–14 years: 46% Male: 49% Female: 45%	30 pp decrease	INSTAT (DHS/MICS)	Data will be available after MICS is implemented and data processed in 2026
Proportion of women of age 18–74 years subjected to i) intimate partner DV, ii) non-partner violence, and iii) sexual harassment, in the previous 12 months (SDG 5.2.1; 5.2.2)	i) 33.7% ii) 2.4% iii) 8.5%	i) 32% ii) 2% iii) 8%	INSTAT	No change in 2023
Proportion of women of age 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (SDG 5.3.1)	1.4 (under 15) 11.8 (under 18)	1 (under 15) 11 (under 18)	INSTAT (DHS/MICS)	15 (under 18)
Existence of systems to track and make public allocations for GEWE (SDG 5.c.1) ⁴²	Approaches requirement	Meets requirement	GoA reports UN reports ⁴³	Yes
Proportion of seats held by women in Parliament and local government (SDG 5.5.1) and national dialogue mechanisms	29.5%	>32%	INSTAT	Data for local government following 2023 elections: b) 42%.

41. Access to justice is a basic principle of the rule of law. <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/access-to-justice-and-rule-of-law-institutions/access-to-justice/>

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

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

OUTPUT 4.1 – END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN: Government institutions at central and local levels and CSOs service providers have increased capacities to prevent and respond to all forms of violence and exploitation against women and children, with focus on vulnerable groups and multidisciplinary, specialized services for the rehabilitation of children suffering sexual abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, and mental health challenges.

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Output Indicator Framework – SDG 5.1				
No. of laws and regulations based on international human rights norms and standards developed with UN support to: a) EVAWG, including harmful practices, and b) promote equal access to SRH care, information and education ⁴⁴	2022: 10	2023: 13	Parliament website CM Website UN and Government reports and website REVALB State Agency of Child Rights and Protection	No new law was developed and finalized this year.
No. of DV cases addressed through CRMs	994	2022: 500 2023: 550		621 (Data from REVALB)
No. of child victims of violence registered by child or social welfare authorities during the year	1,020	2022: 1,100 2023: 1,200		1,200 (data from 2022 as 2023 data is not yet available)
No. of institutions with strengthened capacities to improve the provision of essential services, goods and resources for women	17	2022: 19 2023: 10 (minimum no. of municipalities that will be supported through JP EVAW Phase II)		21

OUTPUT 4.2 - ADDRESSING GENDER STEREOTYPES AND HARMFUL NORMS AND PRACTICES: Influential leaders, communities, families, men and boys, women and girls have improved knowledge and capacities to address harmful norms, stereotypes, and behaviors that drive gender discrimination, VAW, VAC, child marriage

No. of knowledge products by youth articulating the linkages between masculinities, GBV and social cohesion challenges in the region	1	2022–2023: 5 papers (1 per each project territory) 1 regional summary	PBF Project monitoring activities UN Report	1 regional research on Youth, Equality and Trust which includes 5 country-specific reports.
No. of new media platforms and social media actors producing articles and reports on cross-related issues of gender norms and social cohesion challenges	1	2022–2023: 2 media platforms, 30 social media actors (at regional level); 5 videos produced at regional level		0 (media campaign started in 2024)
No. of actions that raise awareness on rural women's roles and rights in agriculture and rural economy	5 nationwide campaigns to disseminate information on rural women's rights	2022: 8 nationwide campaigns implemented in rural areas 2023: 1 nationwide campaign addressing harmful stereotypes		1 nationwide campaign implemented in rural areas
No. of rural women and men informed through awareness raising and trainings	700	2022: 6,500 2023: 7,000		10,557 (57 rural women and men participated in 2 roundtables; 10,500 in the campaign on International Day for Rural Women)
No. of legal acts and policy documents addressing child marriage as a harmful practice	4 (Family Code and Criminal Code, Gender Equality Strategy and Agenda for Child Rights)	2023: 4 2026: 6		6 (2 new: the National Plan for EU Integration and the Code of Ethics in Broadcasting)
No. of communities engaged in dialogue and consensus building on alternatives to child marriage (including education), the rights of adolescents' girls and GE	4	2022: 5 2023: 4 2026: 7		7 (Tirana, Klos, Shkodra, Vau i Dejës, Patos, Pogradec, Permet)

44. UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA report on this indicator. Baseline in 2022 is 10.

OUTPUT 4.3 - GENDER RESPONSIVE PLANNING AND BUDGETING: Government institutions at central and local levels have increased capacities to plan, budget, monitor, track expenditures, and leverage resources for GEWE in targeted sectors.

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Source	Status
Percentage of national budget allocated to GE and women's empowerment out of total budget	9%	2022: 9% 2023: 9%		9.6%
No. of national partners with capacities to apply Gender-Responsive Budgeting tools in budget cycle	17: 10 line ministries, 2 oversight institutions, 5 municipalities	2022: 29 (11 line ministries, 3 oversight institutions, 15 municipalities) 2023: 35 (11 line ministries, 4 oversight institutions, 20 municipalities)	Medium -Term Budget Program Ministry of Finance and Economy Ministry of Finance and Economy UNWOMEN Report	35 (11 line ministries, 4 oversight institutions, 10 municipalities staffs, 10 municipal councils)
Existence of roadmap for gender-responsive value chain development in pilot municipalities, and technical trainings and advice provided by Rural Advisory Services (RAS)	0	2022: 1 2023: 1	FAO project report on Rural Advisory Services (RAS) capacity building	0
Tailored capacity development events conducted for rural advisory services and related partners on gender-responsive services and social behavioural change	0	2022: 3 2023: 2		2

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

No. of partners that have increased capacities to i) promote or influence gender-responsive legislation and its implementation, and (ii) advance GE and women's empowerment through national or local (multi)sectoral strategies, policies or action plans	(i) 10 (ii) 4	2022–2023: (i) 15; (ii) 5/8	Membership lists of the Monitoring Network Against GBV: CLCI, HRDC, ADRF, WFE, GADC, Refleksione, <i>Sot per te ardhmen</i> , CDTF, CRCA, Qendra Psiko-Sociale Vatra Relevant UN project documents and monitoring reports	3 LGUs (Vau, Lezha and Kavaja)
No. of institutions that have increased capacities to design and implement institutional reforms, strategies, policies that promote GEWE	1	2022–2023: 1		13: MoHSP, MoI, LGUs (Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Pogradec, Lezhe, Vau i Dejës, Kavaja, Lushnje, Gramsh, Gjirokastra, Korca)
No. of training and capacity development events for monitoring and reporting on SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2, and on advancing towards target 5.a and CEDAW article 14	0	2022: 0 2023: 2		0

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

No. of rural women who participate in LAGs	0	2022: 2 2023: 15		25
No. of rural women who participate in agribusiness incubators	0	2022: 2 2023: 10	UN Agencies project reports	10
No. of private-sector companies that integrate gender-responsive family-friendly policies in the workplace	6	2022–2026: 3 annually		22 companies (ILO)

Acronyms

AFPRS	Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service	GDP	Gross Domestic Product	NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training		
AP	Action Plan	GE	Gender Equality	NESS	National Employment and Skills Strategy	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ASCAP	Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education)	GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration	GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	NHRIs	national human rights institutions	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ATM	Automated Teller Machine	GHO	Global Health Observatory	NSDEI	National Strategy for Development and European Integration	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
AU	Administrative Unit	GIS	Geographic Information System	OHCHR	(UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
BOS	Business Operations Strategy	GoA	Government of Albania	OMT	Operations Management Team	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
BUR	Biennial Update Report	GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting	OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
CCA	Common Country Analysis	GSVCA	Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis	OSH	Occupational Safety and Health	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
CDCP	Center for Disease Control and Prevention	GTRG	Gender Thematic Results Group	PA	Protected Area	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
CIS	Community Infrastructure Support	HSQ	Health and Safety Education	PHC	Public Healthcare	UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
COP	Conference of the Parties	IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study	UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
Covid-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	ICT	Information and Communications Technology	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination	ILO	International Labour Organisation	PwD	Persons with Disability	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
CPRD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework	RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office	UN RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	INSTAT	National Institute of Statistics	R&E	Roma and Egyptian	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
CRM	Coordinated Referral Mechanism	IOM	International Organisation for Migration	RECP	Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production	UNV	United Nations Volunteers
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education	IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance	REVALB	Recording Violence in Albania	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	IPARD	IPA Rural Development	SACRP	State Agency for Child Rights and Protection	UNYTF	United Nations Youth Task Force
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers	IPH	Institute of Public Health	SARI	Severe Acute Respiratory Infection	UPHV	Universal Progressive Home Visiting
DFA	Development Finance Assessment	ISO	International Organization for Standardization	SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
DLA	Damage and Loss Assessment	IT	Information Technology	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	USA	United States of America
DRM	Disaster Risk Management	ITU	International Telecommunication Union	SPAR	State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting	USAID	US Agency for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	JEC	Joint Executive Committee	SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health	USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
DV	Domestic Violence	JP	Joint Programme	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	VAC	Violence Against Children
ECE	Early Childhood Education	JWP	Joint Work Plan	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths	VAW	Violence Against Women
EPP	Employment Promotion Programme	LED	Light Emitting Diode	SWAP	System-wide Action Plan	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
ERR	Economic Recovery and Resilience	LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer	TCLF	Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear	VET	Vocational and Education Training
ESD	Empowerment through Self Defence	LNB	Leave No One Behind	TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study	WB	Western Balkans
EU	European Union	LTA	Long-term Agreement	ToR	Terms of Reference	WEP	Women's Empowerment Principles
EVAWGC	Elimination of Violence Against Women, Girls and Children	MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey	UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	WHO	World Health Organisation
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women	MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	UHC	University Hospital Centre	WJP	World Justice Project
FADN	Farm Accountancy Data Network	MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports	UK	United Kingdom		
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy	UN	United Nations		
FBO	Faith-based Organisation	MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	UNCT	United Nations Country Team		
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	MoTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade		
FLA	Free Legal Aid	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding				
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	MTBP	Medium-Term Budget Programme				
		NAP	National Action Plan				
		NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation				



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