
GENDER REPORT 2015/2016

July 2016
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IV. FINANCIAL INFORMATION
This Gender Report for Sida covers the period July 2015 – July 2016. The report presents results and the lessons learned from implementation of four outputs of the Programme of Cooperation 2012–2016 supported by Sida funding. It provides an overview of UN contribution to key normative and policy areas addressed, support provided to different stages of the policy process, and emerging innovations and good practices for a more holistic and effective policy support in Albania.

Section I presents the background information on the receipt of Sida funds to the One UN Coherence Fund. Section II provides a brief overview of the main products produced by each output and results attained. The narrative progress, implementation challenges, lessons learned and future direction for each of the four outputs is presented in Section III. The report concludes with an overview of the financial information and the delivery rate to date, presented in Section IV.

I. Background

The Government of Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), provided an additional grant of twenty million Swedish kronor (SEK 20,000,000) to the One UN Coherence Fund (CF) in Albania as defined in the Standard Administrative Arrangement addendum no. 1 between Sweden and the UN, signed on 3rd November 2014. This is the second time that the Swedish Government supports the One UN Programme (2012-2016) in Albania, particularly in its efforts to promote gender equality and eradicate gender-based violence.

Allocations from the Sida contribution intend to support the implementation of gender outputs that are directly related to the new Swedish Results Strategy for Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014 – 2020.

Sida funding supported deliverables under the following PoC outputs:

- **Output 1.3**: Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society.
- **Output 3.1**: Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions
- **Output 3.2**: Line ministries and public service delivery institutions are able to mainstream gender and conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting and evidence-based policy making at all levels
- **Output 4.3**: National and sub-national government units have the capacity to generate and strengthen investments, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and women.

II. Overview of main output products and results

The activities implemented by the UN agencies in Albania under the outputs funded by Sida are fully in line with the global Gender Equality Action Plans of many individual UN agencies and therefore benefit from regional corporate expertise and knowledge products. These activities are part of the Joint Work Plans, prepared and signed jointly by UN Agencies and the Government of Albania implementing line ministries.

Main products by output are presented below:

**Output 1.3 - Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society**

- Package of legislative amendments to sustain and mainstream Gender Equality in the ongoing Justice System reform, compatible with the Istanbul Convention provisions;
- Series of recommendations to ensure that the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations met international standards;
✓ Assessment on CCRs practice;
✓ A regulatory framework defining the standards of services of the national telephone helpline;
✓ “Invisible Violence – An overview on the phenomenon of violence against women and girls with disabilities in Albania” - data collection in the municipalities; recommendations on improving the legal and policy framework on domestic violence against women and girls; five policy papers to guide specific municipal interventions in this regard;
✓ A Civil Society Organization (CSO)–CEDAW Shadow Report on health care in Albania
✓ A survey of vulnerable groups in prison settings

Output 3.1 - Parliament and electoral institutions. Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions
✓ Specific research on the Electoral Code;
✓ Recommendations to the new organic law “On organization and functioning of local government in the Republic of Albania”;
✓ Package of recommendations on Gender Equality to the Central Election Commission;
✓ The first National Elections Integrity System Index;
✓ Ombudsman CEDAW Shadow Report to the UN Committee on CEDAW;
✓ Study “Strengthening the decision-making power of councilwomen in Albania;
✓ Tailored course on ‘Strengthened leadership skills and performance in decision making for councilwomen and women employees in the administration of the newly amalgamated municipalities;
✓ Pilot study investigating public perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality in Albania

Output 3.2 - Mainstreaming gender and gender responsive budgeting. Line ministries and public service delivery institutions are able to mainstream gender and conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting and evidence based-policy making at all levels
✓ Integration of sex-disaggregated, gender-sensitive governance targets in the draft NSDI 2015–2020
✓ Policy addressing harassment and sexual harassment cases among police forces
✓ 26 gender-responsive local development operational plans
✓ Gender equality principles included in Public finance management system
✓ Gender-sensitive assessment and review of Albanian School for Public Administration curricula
✓ State Police Academy training curricula assessed and upgraded in view of the latest legal improvements of the domestic related legislation and newly ratified international treaties
✓ Review over the legal and practical barriers women encounter in accessing justice

Output 4.3 - National and sub-national government units have the capacity to generate and strengthen investments, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and women
✓ Assessment of the compliance of the Private Employment Agencies regulatory framework in Albania vis-à-vis ratified international labour standards for recruitment of migrant workers, with specific focus on the recruitment of females;
✓ Assessments of migrant workers’ exercising their rights in Albania;
✓ National Study on Rural Women and Economic Diversification in Rural Areas in Albania;
✓ Piloting two Women’s Cluster Models in two pilot communes in the region of Elbasan;
✓ Research study “Women in board and senior position in companies operating in Albania”
✓ Launching Women Empowerment Principals – Tirana Municipality
✓ Operational guidelines on implementation of Women Entrepreneurs Fund – Tirana Municipality

Sida support enabled the UN to achieve substantial results, some attained for the first time in the country.

Significant steps were taken in implementation of gender sensitive policies at the local level and mechanisms to prevent and fight domestic violence. The Government of Albania empowered local structures to deal with this phenomenon by establishing multi-disciplinary community coordinated response mechanisms in 27 out of the 61 municipalities (44%). More than 1,100\(^1\) cases of domestic violence were registered over the period 2013–2015 through the CCR online tracking system, an important tool for monitoring implementation of gender-based violence legislation. Due to an increased level of awareness, victims of domestic violence and their families reported 3,000 cases to the state police in 2015 compared to 94 cases in 2005. Applying the lessons learned from UN-supported CCR models in 27 municipalities, government is vested towards 100 percent country coverage, setting a positive pattern in south-eastern Europe.

Gender equality continues to be a critical development area in Albania and the UN is committed to a strategic, multi-sectoral approach. In response to UN work to make gender equality central to planning and budgeting for national development and EU integration, civil servants at the central and local level, CSOs and academia increased their knowledge of the application of gender equality and gender-responsive planning and budgeting. Gender equality objectives and priorities were incorporated into national plans and budgets: ten line ministries, one independent institution and 16 medium-term Budgetary Programmes 2016–2018\(^2\), a breakthrough compared to none in 2013, totaling USD 61,534,401 or 4% of these ministries overall budget in 2016, the largest state budget yet committed to advancing gender equality. Also, the collection of sex-disaggregated data is now mandatory in Albania. Education is extremely important when it comes to gender equality. UN support to the Ministry of Education and Sports is ensuring gender mainstreaming in its policy and standard-setting work.

UN support to the Territorial Administrative Reform continues with assisting 26 municipalities in formulation of their engendered short-term local development operational plans, which will serve as blueprints during their first two to three years of operations. Going forward, UN assessment related to the above plans will feed into the development of long term general/territorial plans, under the auspices of the Ministry of Urban Development, five of which are already under formulation by USAID's Planning and Local Governance Project.

The National Study on Rural Women and Economic Diversification in Rural Areas in Albania, the first of its kind in the country, will create an initial baseline of knowledge on the economic situation of rural women in Albania and related obstacles in order to enhance the sector’s capacity to formulate evidence-based policies and strategies as well as identify opportunities for the economic empowerment of rural women. Going forward in institutionalizing support for rural women in Albania, the government is committed to design one dedicated subsidy scheme for women engaged in economic activities in rural areas.

\(^1\) 73% of women survivors of domestic violence live in rural areas and more than one in three are unemployed.

III. Progress, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Forward Focus

Progress by Output

Output 1.3 - Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society

Under this output, UN work focuses on the overall goal of eliminating violence against women and children through activities that promote laws, policies, and strategies being adopted, restructured and implemented to respond to and prevent violence, and reduce the incidence of trafficking of women and girls by addressing its root causes, including limited awareness, domestic violence, and lack of economic alternatives.

The Parliament and the government developed a package of legislative amendments with the UNDP support to sustain and mainstream Gender Equality in the ongoing Justice System reform, compatible with the Istanbul Convention provisions. In the same vein, the Parliament organized a special round table on Justice Reform and Women's Rights to ensure that justice reform integrates gender commitments and complies with international norms and standards.

In addition, a series of recommendations were made in consultation with judges, prosecutors, defence lawyers, line ministry specialists and High Council of Justice inspectors to ensure that the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations met international standards.

There have been significant steps forward in the implementation of gender sensitive policies at the local level and mechanisms to prevent and fight domestic violence. As part and parcel of the UNDP efforts to improve the quality of Community Coordinated Response (CCR) mechanisms, a thorough assessment was conducted on CCRs practice. Clear progress was reported in the functionality of 27 CCR mechanisms out of 61 municipalities (44%). While in 2015, 312 domestic violence cases were reported, the majority being reported in four municipalities where CCRs are supported by the UN, there are challenges in crosschecking and consolidating data across all local CCR members. Significant efforts are needed to make CCR mechanisms fully functional, effective, sustainable and present in all municipalities.

A total of 123 police officers and members of CCR mechanisms were trained in Kruja, Saranda, Kavaja, Erseka, Burrel and Permet municipalities on (i) domestic violence as a phenomenon; (ii) understanding the police role in the CCR teams against Gender Based and Domestic Violence at the local level; (iii) understanding the requirements of the Law on Measures Against Violence in Family Relations; and (iv) implementing regulations and standard procedures in responding to domestic violence cases. Carried out jointly with the Ministry of the Interior, specifically the General State Police Department, this activity was deemed important in developing the professional capacities of law enforcement agency employees and boosting their cooperation in order to effectively prevent and deal with GB&DV cases at the local level. Due to an increased level of awareness, victims of domestic violence and their families reported 3,000 cases to the state police in 2015 compared to 94 cases in 2005.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, the UN addressed the need to ensuring basic support shelters for survivors by supporting the domestic violence shelters, including the state-
run National Shelter for DV victims, to improve improved focus on the adoption of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes with both state and non-state service providers. The support provided by UNDP, UN Women and IOM ensured that 47% of GB&DV survivors in the National Shelter were successfully employed in 2015 compared to 38% in 2014. During 2015, the National Shelter accommodated 26 women in total, 8 of which were employed in the private sector on a one year working contracts with potential of renewal. For the period January-May 2016, out of the total number of DV survivors, 53.3% were successfully integrated through employment, social housing and legal empowerment.

Furthermore, pursuant to the requirements set in the Istanbul Convention regarding the establishment of the national helpline for victims of domestic violence, technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth for the preparation of a regulatory framework defining the standards of services of the national telephone helpline. The regulatory framework is expected to be adopted by the Council of Ministers for immediate implementation in 2016.

Together with its partners, the UN is actively involved in promoting activism in the fight against violence against women. To explore in depth the phenomenon of violence against women and girls with disabilities, UN agencies, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF, promoted “Invisible Violence – An overview on the phenomenon of violence against women and girls with disabilities in Albania” gathering data in the municipalities of Shkodra, Dibra, Elbasan, Kukës and Korça. Concrete recommendations were provided on improving the legal and policy framework on domestic violence against women and girls; improving data collection and reporting system for violence against women and girls; enhancing cross-institutional cooperation and coordination and improving capacities of professionals to address issues related to violence against women and girls with disabilities; improving access to information and delivery of services for women and girls with disabilities. In addition, five policy papers were drafted and agreed with respective responsible actors at the local level to guide specific municipal interventions in this regard.

The National Action Plan on Men & Boys to support women and girls is being strongly implemented by MoSWY with the support from UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA: UNiTE to End Violence against Women, a campaign of 16 days of activism against gender violence, and the rolling out of the HeForShe initiative have been conducted nationwide by volunteers, CSOs and TV media reaching over 27,650 people. To show their commitment, leaders of the 5 main religious communities of the country signed cooperation agreements with the MSWY to advocate for gender equality & fight against GBV. Events in Tirana, Kavaja, Kolonja, Pogradec Dibra, Durrës, Korca, Shkodra, Vlora, Elbasan Kukes, Fier, Lezhe, and Saranda impacted youth through discussions, aiming to inform them about the disadvantages of domestic violence and encourage young men to empower women.

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3 Support consisted mainly in capacity building interventions, purchase of vocational equipment and computers to conduct related trainings in the shelters, employment of survivors and financial support for the first 6 months, and support to 3 social businesses conducted by the shelters including business plans in place and initial support to staff.

4 https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1000852716640171.1073741904.302120716513378&type=3
The HeForShe campaign continued its partnership with the Olympic Committee. A remarkable event was organized during International Sports Day, April 6th, 2016, with the support from Sida, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and implementing partners. The concept of the event revolved around the importance of sports in terms of inclusiveness and the possibility to enhance girls' and women's self-esteem and well-being and to foster their empowerment. The HeForShe unfolded in many other activities: April 10th and 11th the national Federation of Swimming embraced the Campaign during its National Championship resulting in well-known and talented swimmers committing to the HeForShe and to Gender Equality. Two videos featuring fans of the two most famous football clubs in Albania, singing a choir about their love for their mothers were produced during this Campaign. Furthermore, UN is collaborating with Vodafone in developing the HeForShe in Football Pitches project. Vodafone is corporately embracing the campaign and in the 2016Q1 held the HeForShe days in Universities. In the same vain, the HeForShe was embraced by the Dutch Ambassador and a HeForShe Day took place at the Netherlands Embassy.

The government has been engaged in UNFPA’s advocacy and awareness-raising actions on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Youth Voice. A Civil Society Organization (CSO)–CEDAW Shadow Report on health care in Albania was prepared with UNFPA support and the engagement of 21 organizations.

A survey of vulnerable groups in prison settings, completed by UNFPA, sought to reveal the complexity of challenges in addressing sexual and reproductive health, HIV–AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in a prison setting, taking into account gender-based violence. Findings will draw attention to the needs of this population, advocate or essential investment and their access to quality services, and for inclusion of their needs in the primary health care basic package of reproductive health protocols. The survey sample consisted of 211 people—8 percent of whom were female—in thirteen prisons in the country, including the prison hospital, consisting of a total of 6000 people.

"Not only 8th of March" is the winning prototype video of an innovation boot camp that involved Tirana University students, academia and civil society to design a public awareness campaign against domestic and gender-based violence as part of the UNiTE worldwide campaign. "Not only on 8th of March" shows the reactions of the public when confronted with a violent incident. The event was organized by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, and the Faculty of Social Sciences in the framework of “Gender Equality Programme” financed by the Government of Sweden. The video went viral on social media and traditional media and is one of the most effective campaigns on violence against women in Albania.

### Challenges & Lessons Learned

The ongoing Justice Reform has shifted the focus of the legislative and executive bodies towards important law improvements with special impact on the rights of women in general and more particularly on the rights of gender based and domestic violence victims. While substantial UN support has already been provided to further improve the legal framework in compliance with the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW standards, the UN will continue to address this need in close collaboration...
with government and other relevant partners through coordinated multi-sectorial support and tailored services at both local and central levels of governance.

The UN will exploit the opportunity arising from the territorial reform and decentralization to expand the mechanisms of coordination and referral on GBV to the entire country. In this regard, the UN will strengthen existing partnerships and focus on developing new partnerships between central and local government in addition to increasing relevant capacities and resources. An important lesson learned is the need to ensure involvement of local authorities at the earliest stage of the implementation of local initiatives that aim at women’s economic empowerment and building resilient lives for women free from violence. In addition, developing partnerships with private entities is a relatively new domain for some UN agencies. Hence the design and implementation of innovative activities with private partners might take longer than expected.

**Forward Focus**

The UN will maintain the normative rights agenda and advance it further by ensuring national scaling and implementation of the social cohesion policies and of the coordinated community response (CCR) mechanisms, closing the virtual cycle of “pilot to policy” from the previous programming period, with national scaling through local level implementation on the basis of the new amalgamated local government units.

The HeForShe will continue its partnership with the Vodafone foundation, and the kickoff of the project ‘HeForShe in Football Pitches’ is planned to happen in September: at the center of the intervention is the football environment, well-known for its low gender sensitive connotations. Also, the work with the Olympic Committee will continue, paving the way for the engagement of new models of change from the sports domain.

**Progress by Output**

**Output 3.1 - Parliament and electoral institutions. Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions**

UN work in this area, deriving from the unique mandate and capacities vested with the UN Department of Political Affairs and UN Electoral Assistance Division, supports capacity development of electoral management bodies and functioning of the legislature as a core branch of governance following CEDAW and gender equality considerations. Additionally, the capacities of the country’s public oversight institutions, namely the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and the Ombudsman, are strengthened to enable them to monitor, report and redress violations of rights especially of vulnerable groups such as women and children deriving from main human rights conventions.

The Women’s Alliance in Parliament engages in strategic and action planning through improved capacities and stronger internal organisation. Specific UN Women research has served as a key instrument for the Alliance to prepare arguments on the Electoral Code in both Parliamentary Hearings and in the media as well as organize and advocate for legislation that promotes Gender Equality. Most importantly, concrete amendments to the Electoral Code for stronger quota for local councils and mayors were proposed and advocated for by the Alliance. UN Women support in facilitating a strategic retreat of Women Alliance enabled women MPs to discuss and agree on a plan of actions for 2016 focusing on increasing women representation at the national level.

The new organic law “On organization and functioning of local government in the Republic of Albania”, implemented by the Minister of State for Local Government, integrated 80% of amendments based on UN Women specific recommendations on gender equality in full compliance with the
international obligations, Gender Equality Law (2008) and Albania commitments towards European Integration. This constitutes a step forward in the effective promotion of women in local self-government and empowerment of women in local communities and will establish a good entry point of working with elected officials at the local level.

Central Electoral Commission (CEC) capacities on gender responsive electoral management and outreach are further strengthened. In March 2016, during the Electoral Reform, CEC presented in a parliamentary public hearing of the Law Commission a package of recommendations on Gender Equality, prepared with UN Women’s technical support. Based on this work, CEC has collected for the first time sex-disaggregated data for women as voters, also published under a dedicated Gender Equality section recommended by UN Women. The BRIDGE training on Gender in Elections, organized jointly with UN Women’s support, further contributed to developing CEC capacities to mainstream gender in all of its departments as presented during the CEC Annual Retreat in November 2015.

The NGOs network implementing Community Based Scorecards built a strong partnership with Citizens Advisory Panels to increase their advocacy with local decision makers and created four Scorecards. The June Local Elections enabled CSOs to monitor women participation in elections and engage youth as Gender Advocate. In addition, the 7 NGOs of the Election Situations Room advocated with a unified voice for women issues in elections. The first National Elections Integrity System Index (NEISI) was produced, a comprehensive assessment and a holistic analysis of the electoral system (i.e. institutional capacities and legal provisions), as well as of the electoral process (i.e. administration of elections).

Furthermore, the People’s Advocate Institution is more capable to monitor and enforce national and international commitments. Supported by UN Women, the Ombudsman submitted its first ever CEDAW Shadow Report to the UN Committee on CEDAW in 2016Q1 identifying a number of areas where it can play a crucial role to further strengthen the monitoring of the implementation of the CEDAW recommendations. As per the report recommendations, regarding the amendments to the Electoral Code to ensure a 50% men and 50% women representation in the Assembly of the Republic of Albania, the Ombudsman followed with a recommendation to the heads of the parliamentary groups of the Assembly of Albania “On an initiative to improve the Electoral Code aiming at equal gender representation and access”, adding an additional voice in support of this important initiative in Albania.

Councilwomen, women in political party forums, women in parliament and civil society representatives are well aware of the barriers that women face in local government decision-making processes and the underlying roots of their limited powers in the political parties. A study “Strengthening the decision-making power of councilwomen in Albania“ was conducted by UNDP on the voice of women and their role in 137 local councils with the participation of 186 councilwomen, from both urban and rural areas. The study found that the women caucus in Parliament, newly elected councilwomen and political party women generate concrete ideas on how to pursue the following: i) the advancement of the agenda of women empowerment in politics, ii) increasing the oversight role of central and local parliaments regarding implementation of the gender legal machinery for ensuring the enjoyment of the rights of women, and iii) lobbying for an increase in the gender quota in the electoral code for general elections and ensuring effective safeguards administered by the central electoral management bodies.

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10 http://www.cec.org.al/sq-al/burazia-gjinore
11 This assessment is a product of the Election Situation Room (ESR), a platform for 7 CSOs in Albania aiming to enhance collaboration among CSOs engaged in activities related to election processes and monitoring. http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Indeks-i-Integritetit-të-Zgjedhjeve_FINAL_Sep2015.pdf
13 Systematic lobbying for future electoral law improvements; Increasing accountability of respective line ministries through parliamentary hearing sessions on the advancement and the implementation of the gender considerations at central and local levels of governance.
In parallel to this, the Albanian School of Public Administration, with UNDP support, started to develop a tailored course on ‘Strengthened leadership skills and performance in decision making for councilwomen and women employees in the administration of the newly amalgamated municipalities. This training course, consulted with women in local municipal councils and administrations, trained a total of 24 councilwomen and women in leading positions in local government entities. In addition, ASPA has introduced this module as part of their training programme.

A pilot study\textsuperscript{14} was prepared by UNDP investigating public perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality in Albania, focusing on the types of barriers hindering women’s successful integration into the labour market and proposing strategies that promote the economic empowerment of women. The study was launched in the first quarter of 2016 drawing on 450 interviews conducted in the four regions of the country – mountainous, coastal, central, and Tirana regions. The study sheds light on the following aspects: the division of household chores; the division of responsibilities for childcare; perceptions and attitudes towards the role of women and men in the family; employment and income; money management; career-family balance; and recommended areas of intervention to increase the participation of women and girls in the labor market, and the contribution of men and boys in the house\textsuperscript{15}. The research recommendations inform evidence-based interventions that can be utilized to affect public perceptions and attitudes, grow the support for gender equality, and reduce the gap between legal changes and local realities in Albania.

**Challenges & Lessons Learned**

An important lesson learned is the need to ensure involvement of local authorities at the earliest stage of the implementation of local initiatives that aim at women’s economic empowerment and building resilient lives for women free from violence. The UN will continue to address this need through maintaining a close working relationship with the municipal administration in each step of the implementation and beyond.

**Forward Focus**

The UN will further support councilwomen to increase women’s advocacy role in policy and decision making processes as well as the capacities of women and civil society in holding decision-makers to account for the adoption of good policies and practices at the local level.

UN agencies actions will focus on further developing women’s economic empowerment: self-employment opportunities for poor, marginalized and vulnerable women; and increased knowledge among women about their economic, property and family rights.

**Progress by Output**

*Output 3.2 - Mainstreaming gender and gender responsive budgeting. Line ministries and public service delivery institutions are able to mainstream gender and conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting and evidence based-policy making at all levels*

UN support in this area focuses on strengthening government accountability through incorporation of gender equality objectives and priorities in national plans and budgets. Particular attention is paid to develop the knowledge and capacities of civil servants at the central and local level, CSOs and academia in applying gender responsive planning and budgeting. Support is provided to advance approaches that attract and build the


\textsuperscript{15} This study found strong support for the “the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the homemaker” model. The majority of respondents reported that it is usually women who do the laundry and iron clothes; clean the house; cook; and wash dishes. The two household chores where men were more likely than women to be involved were related to house maintenance and the payment of bills. Women and men were more likely to share the following tasks: taking out the garbage, shopping, and taking care of sick family members. Women do the lion’s share of child-rearing and household tasks. Men are more likely to be involved in cases of health emergencies, for instance taking the child to a doctor.
capacity of women to leadership positions in service delivery institutions. Advocacy and awareness raising initiatives ensure that citizens and government alike see gender mainstreaming as the only possible way that governance is performed.

In view of the substantial changes ensuing from EU accession as well as the recent legal and policy advances of the territorial and administrative reform, there is an increasing need for the public administration at both the central and local level to be equipped with the required skills for implementing government’s national and international commitments on gender equality, preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and mainstreaming EU directives on gender equality through the work of public officials. The Albanian School for Public Administration (ASPA) assumes a central role in equipping civil servants with the respectively required knowledge and skills for ensuring efficient absorption and application of the EU Gender Equality acquis.


Furthermore, as part of UN’s support for the territorial reform, UNDP and UN Women assisted 26 amalgamated municipalities to prepare gender-responsive local development operational plans, approved by the 26 mayors who will pursue their implementation in the future.

Education is extremely important when it comes to gender equality. Combatting gender stereotypes has been recognised by the National Strategy on Gender Equality and against Gender-Based and Domestic Violence as a key issue to be tackled through education from the early ages. In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Sports is being supported by UNICEF to ensure gender mainstreaming in its policy and standard-setting work.

As part of the new UNDAF formulation for 2017-2021, the Common Country Assessment and the related Gender Position Paper considered patriarchal mentalities - already present and pressed on to individuals since their childhood – as the root causes of gender inequalities and disempowerment of women and girls in Albanian society. UNICEF made sure to integrate and strengthen gender equality-related elements to the ongoing parenting club programme for Roma, implemented by the civil society partners under the “Each Roma in Pre-school” national initiative. Going forward, the Ministry of

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15 During 2016Q2, the strategy was consulted with state and non-state partners and final draft was submitted to the Council of Ministers for endorsement.
17 Belsh, Buqizë, Delvinë, Devoll, Dropull, Finiq, Fushë-Arrëz, Gramsh, Has, Kamërë, Kelcyrë, Kolonjë, Libohovë, Malqë, Mallakastër, Memaliq, Mirditë, Patos, Peqin, Përmet, Pukë, Pustec, Roskovec, Selena, Tepelenë and Vau-Dejës
Education and Sports and the Institute for Development of Education have identified the need to build the capacities of school directors, administrations and teachers in absorbing, internalising and then transmitting the gender equality concepts to children, which will be addressed jointly with UN agencies in 2016 and beyond.

In addition, IOM is vested in (i) mainstreaming anti-trafficking trainings into the core curriculum of the primary and secondary schools and as part of the gender and civil education curriculum (including also general child protection, child rights, gender equality and domestic violence issues, and sex education); (ii) provide trainings for school personnel, teachers, the school psycho-social service (psychologists, social workers) and school doctors on Trafficking in Persons related subjects aiming towards implementation of anti-trafficking training modules, detection of children at risk and how to make reference to potential trafficking cases. In 2016Q1, a consultation process took place with participation of main implementing partners: Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Members of the National Referral Mechanism and in particular with Ministry of Education and Sports.

Sixteen Medium-Term Budgeting Programmes (MTBP) for the period 2016-2018, across ten ministries and one independent state institution have integrated gender equality related objectives, outputs and associated costs as a result of the UN Women’s tailored assistance to the Ministry of Finance and other line ministries. Financial targets set up to achieve these gender equality objectives range from 1.3% to 7.6% of the ministries’ total budgetary allocations for the next three years. Allocation of public funds based on gender equality criteria shows a concrete commitment of the government to promote equality not just by improving policies, but also through equitable public expenditure. A historical milestone of USD 61 million of public funds were allocated to budget products that promote achievement of gender equality across sectors in the country. A series of open participatory budgeting meetings were organized prior to the approval of local and state budgets for 2016 providing an average of ten concrete recommendations for better and equitable funding allocations to social services.

In addition, UNDP and UN Women supported ASPA in the gender-sensitive assessment and review of its current curricula. The Assessment of Critical Gender Gaps in the Training of Albanian Public Sector Employees assessed all the existing ASPA training modules from a gender perspective and identified 20 critical gender gaps in the existing documents. 26 recommendations were issued to address these gaps and ASPA followed through with an update of its current curricula and training modules, targeting top level ministry management. Going forward, ASPA will use the engendered top management curricula and training modules as part of their training programme as well as make further use of the provided recommendations applying them to its entire curricula and training modules.

The State Police Academy, supported by UNDP, assessed and upgraded the training curricula on GBV–DV in view of the latest legal improvements of the domestic related legislation and newly ratified

\[^{19}\text{Recommendations relate to: (1) the content of training and methodology of delivery; (2) capacity development; and (3) the promotion of gender equality vis-à-vis institutional change.}\]
international treaties. 23 trainers from the academy were trained on acquiring pedagogical skills in their future capacity building work with police staff using this upgraded training curricula and modules. Additionally, this is the first public institution that adopted in 2015 with UNDP support a harmonized policy to properly address harassment and sexual harassment cases among police forces. In this regard, 512 basic role and middle management police staff were trained in 9 regions\textsuperscript{20} of the country. The impact of this training will be monitored through a survey by end 2016.

In addition, UNDP supported an independent NGO to review the situation over the legal and practical barriers women encounter in accessing justice. The review\textsuperscript{21} showed that in 82.9\% of the cases women are not guaranteed enforcement of court orders on child alimony and no alternative is provided by law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, this situation leads to a low level of access of women and children in the justice system and it violates the due process of law principle as enshrined in the European Court of Human Rights and the Constitution of Republic of Albania. The review was consulted with national partners, highlighting the unequal distribution of benefits among men and women in divorce cases, and called for improvements to the law and realistic alternative solutions for state compensation of child alimony in divorce cases, especially for mothers and victims of domestic violence with court protection orders.

A training workshop on the use of the UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM) in university-level teaching curricula was held in Tirana in March 2016, organized jointly by UNESCO and UN Women. It counted 35 participants including journalists from different regions of the country and different forms of media, journalism students, University of Tirana professors and representatives of the civil society. The interactions at the workshop showed that there is considerable scope for taking forward the process of promoting gender equality and balance in the media in Albania. The recommendation generated from the workshop include the initiation of studies/surveys to generate data on gender balance in media personnel as well as media content in Albania. Several international examples – such as the Global Media Monitoring Project and the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media, could be examined to decide what methodology would serve the purpose and suit the media scene in Albania best. Universities and other research institutes, INSTAT, journalists’ associations/unions and civil society organizations active in the media space can play an important role in the data collection and analysis process. This would be a good domain for UN involvement to persuade media houses themselves to establish internal mechanisms to generate sex-disaggregated data, especially with regard to personnel.

UNESCO also supported the implementation of the project “Albanian Women in Science Network - AWISN - role model for young women in their engagement in non-traditional professions”. The implementation is the logical follow-up on results achieved in the previous period and will contribute to make a long-term and sustainable impact in the Albanian society. The project aims to provide a model of the women advancement in various scientific related areas. Its specific objectives are focused on (i) providing a public platform for the members of the Network to share their opinions on various issues of public interest; (ii) promoting the members of the AWISN as role models for society; and (iii) enhancing the presence of the socially and scientifically engaged women in the public media.

**Challenges & Lessons Learned**

The shift of the Minister in the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth made GE being less of a priority as re-establishing relationships with a new cabinet team proved challenging. In addition, following the 2015 Local Elections, there has been change in leadership in key municipalities as well as staff turnover in many state institutions at the local and central level, which had a significant effect on implementation

\textsuperscript{20} Tiranë, Shkodër, Lezhë, Korçë, Elbasan, Durrës, Fier, Vlorë, Berat and Gjirokastër

of activities. UN agencies will continue to partner with the new municipal leaders, new ministerial leadership and new civil servants in the line ministries and seek common interest to practice and build on public fund transparency and accountability, thus promoting human rights and gender equality.

The recent territorial reform challenges the municipal leaders with a growing number of inhabitants and a larger territory to cover with services. Local level engagement is key to driving genuine change and implementation as the new local governance system has the potential to provide services to urban and rural population alike. Hence, given the vacuum of support at this level, a stronger presence by the UN, accompanied by partnerships with local CSOs, can produce better impact. In order to ensure sustainability of joint efforts in addressing gender equality issues at local level, local governments need support to provide equitable services to all women and men in their constituencies.

The implementation so far of the UN-GoA gender mainstreaming deliverables, increases and reinforces the conviction that investing in education of children and their parents is the right way to tackle the issue of patriarchal mentalities, pervasive discriminatory attitudes and gender inequalities, thereby going to the roots of the problem. However, just changing the curricula and building pilot programmes that promote gender equality will not be sufficient to transform the entire culture of the country. Capacity building efforts for education professionals, to start with, need to be extensive and continuously reinforced. Further, gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion need to become part of their performance evaluation schemes. Public investment in promoting gender equality through parenting, needs to be encouraged through advocacy. All of these need to be achieved by gradual and repetitive interventions over the course of several years. The country, despite rapid progress in gender equality in recent years, has not yet reached the point where gains are non-reversible, in the absence of the support and encouragement of the international community.

**Forward Focus**

Gender mainstreaming work will continue with specific deliverables in the following dimensions: a) development of the new National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence (2016-2020) Action Plan in consultation with the relevant actors; b) strategic litigation for women’s rights; and c) capacity needs assessment of local and central administration and provision of training on gender mainstreaming.

The UN will continue supporting women’s access to property through improved response by responsible institutions and legal counselling and public awareness. Good governance will be promoted through improved participatory planning and budgeting between municipal authorities, CSOs and citizens.

The UN is planning to address gender equality aspects in specially-designed parenting programmes. Taking into account limited experience of the Ministry of Education and Science in the development and implementation of parenting education programmes, the UN has identified a civil society partner “Today for the Future” that can support the implementation of a parenting programme in 2016. In addition, the UN is working on developing a training curriculum on anti-trafficking to be used by teachers at school. The aim is to have the training curriculum translated and published within September 2016 and distributed to teachers for usage during the new academic year 2016-2017.

The UN will continue to support the ministries in charge of Education and Communication to take forward the process of promoting gender equality and balance in the media in Albania.

Awareness raising and promotion of Women in Science will continue in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sports, academia and the civil society.
Supported by the UN, both the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth are in the process of developing important legislation and policies addressing child rights and child protection emphasising, in particular, the role of families to protect and contribute to the effective socialization of their children as they grow up. In particular, the Ministry of Justice is developing a Justice for Children Strategy, part of which will be to propose models for prevention of child delinquency and reintegration of children in conflict and contact with the law within their community. These models will focus not only on the child but also on their parents. In addition, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth is developing a new Law on Child Rights and Child Protection, introducing measures for parental programmes.

**Progress by Output**

**Output 4.3 - National and sub-national government units have the capacity to generate and strengthen investments, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and women**

*UN initiatives in this area address policy dialogue and partnership with the Government of Albania and the private sector through provision of technical support aiming to shape current policy debates on development, with particular focus on ensuring that domestic policies and international actions are mutually supportive in bringing inclusive and sustainable economic growth through enhanced regulatory frameworks.*

UNDP continues its support to vulnerable women in rural and semi-rural areas such as in Erseka, Vithkuq, Hore Vranisht, Novosela and Burrel aimed at women social and economic empowerment. Training, workshops, fairs, sales events and coaching were conducted to build skills in learning appropriate methods of collecting, processing and marketing local and handicraft products, building sustainable partnerships and designing business plans for successful women-run social enterprises. These interventions increased i) awareness of the area’s products aiming to expand their trademark by the private businesses that operate in other regions of the country; ii) income for women resulting in their economic empowerment; and iii) women’s orientation towards private initiatives to self-employment. Through a participatory process, four business plans were developed and four cooperation agreements between women and local authorities were established. Out of 58 women identified in the above regions for the establishment of local entrepreneurship, 29 were trained on medical and forest fruits processing and a processing center for such products was established in Burrel.

UNDP’s economic literacy programme for women, conducted in five regions of the country—Burrel, Sarandë, Vlorë, Koçe and Durrës—reached out to 170 vulnerable women in local communities and to relevant state and non-state bodies emphasizing women’s rights, duties and protection mechanisms in family, marital, work and property relations, and the role and responsibilities of local state bodies to appropriate implementation of these rights and safeguards.

IOM conducted an assessment of the compliance of the Private Employment Agencies regulatory framework in Albania vis-à-vis ratified international labour standards for recruitment of migrant workers, with specific focus on the recruitment of females. Standards of ethical recruitment were developed for implementation by the Albanian public and private employment agencies. Besides the assessment, officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth enhanced their knowledge of ethical recruitment through a study visit in Poland organized in March 2016.

In addition, two assessments of migrant workers’ exercising their rights in Albania were undertaken by IOM including (i) a review of policies and legislation in Albania vis-à-vis international legal instruments in the field of migrant rights; and (ii) a field survey to collect evidence on the practical exercise of migrant rights in Albania and existing challenges/cases of right infringement. The assessments analyzed rights protection and access to rights for female migrant workers in particular, taking into account eventual situations of vulnerability (such as the case of domestic workers). They
provided useful recommendations for the government on how to advance migrants’ rights protection in Albania. Two round tables with stakeholders were organized to validate the findings of the assessments. To enhance sustainability of results, a standard methodology for similar annual assessments is being developed for application by the People’s Advocate. Both assessments have a strong gender component; hence their recommendations will help the government to develop gender sensitive policy provisions in regulating the status of migrant workers in Albania and abroad and ensuring their protection.

So far, too little has been done to fully recognize women’s role on farms and in rural communities - legally, economically, technologically and in statistics. According to CEDAW concluding observations the situation of rural women is extreme and demographic changes have affected the family and rural women in particular. The committee recommends that gender impact analysis of all social and economic policies and of measures aimed at reducing poverty should be conducted. In this regard, UN Women in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Water Administration is finalizing a National Study on Rural Women and Economic Diversification in Rural Areas in Albania, the first of its kind in the country. The study carries a thorough diagnosis of the socio-economic status of rural women Albania, in order to identify any particular constrain or potential which inhibit or enhance the women engagement in the economic and social spheres of rural livelihood. The study will create an initial baseline of knowledge on the economic situation of rural women in Albania and related obstacles in order to enhance the sector’s capacity to formulate evidence-based policies and strategies as well as identify opportunities for the economic empowerment of rural women. Going forward in institutionalizing support for rural women in Albania, UN Women is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Water Administration to design one dedicated subsidy scheme for women engaged in economic activities in rural areas.

While participation in economic agricultural clusters is considered a relevant instrument for women’s economic empowerment, especially in rural areas, UN Women is supporting both the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Water Administration and the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship in piloting two Women’s Cluster Models in two pilot communes in the region of Elbasan: a community based agro-tourism cluster in Belsh Municipality and one around the former municipality of Gjinar. The cluster in Belsh is composed of 25 rural women providing various services in the area, while that in Gjinar comprises 20 women involved in bee-keeping activities. These pilots aim to implement change and reach progress in developing capacities. To date, 30 women are trained and have improved skills and knowledge on the subject. Both cluster are registered and operational.

In addition, the government’s consideration of the state of gender diversity in Albanian company boards and senior management, prompted by the concern that women continue to be under-represented despite progress in education and employment, was addressed by UN Women through the research study “Women in board and senior position in companies operating in Albania” presenting findings, insights and concrete recommendations for immediate actions to change women representation in decision -

22 An economic cluster is a geographical concentration of businesses where enough resources and competences amass to reach a critical threshold, giving the cluster a key position in a given economic branch of activity, with a decisive sustainable competitive advantage over other places, even top position in the world in that field.
making and top managerial positions in corporate level in Albania. Given the lack of information on the participation of women on Boards and senior management position in private companies in Albania, this study will be the first in the country to provide data on women in top positions in the companies and analyze barriers women face to advance in career. The study will be finalized within 2016Q3 and it will serve to clearly articulate the data findings in the Albanian women rights agenda, provide the necessary arguments for future actions and be used as a benchmark for further studies in the coming years. This study has already provided its first contribution when in 2016Q1, the government committed publicly to introduce binding quotas for government owned companies. Going forward, UN Women and the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship are discussing on the preparation of the relevant legislation in this regard.

In parallel, UN Women is working with the Municipality of Tirana to launch, for the first time in the country, the Women Empowerment Principals (WEPs). The effort will initially concentrate in Tirana, considering the density of the corporate sector as most of corporate headquarters are located in the capital. UN Women and Tirana Municipality will jointly advocate to the business sector operating in Tirana for their recognition, commitment and endorsement/signature of WEPs through workshops and identification of existing good pro-women practices. An information session on the subject took place in June 2016 appealing to all businesses that will voluntarily join the initiative and want to have a successful business with ‘gender objectives’ in mind.

Additionally, UN Women is working closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship on implementation of the National Action Plan for Women Entrepreneurship 2014–2020, namely pushing forward the agenda of the National Plan by providing business training, counselling, mentoring, access to credit and capital, and marketing opportunities for women entrepreneurs throughout Albania. In this regard, UN Women supported the Municipality of Tirana to prepare the operational guidelines on the implementation of the Women Entrepreneurs Fund at Tirana Municipality, established in 2016Q1 and will be operational in the second quarter of 2016. The fund will support directly various industries of women owned micro- small and medium enterprises as well as encourage women led start up activities.

### Challenges & Lessons Learned

During clusters establishment, members have withdrawn from the initiative due to lack of understanding on its implications with the ongoing government’s formalization process on individual farmers/self-employed. The UN addressed this issue by informing cluster members-to-be on the implications risks and benefits of formalizing into a cluster. Nevertheless, given the lack of a Tourism Strategy of Albania, the UN considered appropriate to hold the process for a more mature intervention in 2016.

UN Women is working closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship on implementation of the National Action Plan for Women Entrepreneurship 2014–2020. The establishment of a women’s business centre within the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), a key priority of the newly established Advisory Board for the coordination and monitoring of the Action Plan, was addressed by UN Women through the development of a concept:

23 The Women’s Empowerment Principles are a set of Principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of a collaboration between UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact. The Principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment and are informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe.

24 The meeting hosted 40 business companies operating in Tirana

25 The Women Entrepreneurs Fund is a project of Tirana Municipality, funded by public sources (foreseen in the budget line “Empowerment of women and fostering of entrepreneurship”) and designed to support the creation or expansion of viable business activities by women, capable of being successful in a competitive market. Established in 2016, the fund will support directly various industries of women-owned micro-small and medium enterprises as well as encourage women to start their own business activities. The total fund size is up to 6.000.000 ALL for a period of 1 year with potential replication annually.
for its operationalization. However, AIDA’s restructuring and new leadership in place along with the institution’s capacity to absorb the new competences has currently put the operationalization on hold.

In addition, from an economical perspective, the UN need to carefully re-consider its projected interventions with MEDTTE/AIDA. Given the support these institutions receive from other development partners in the country, UN will complement such efforts focusing on providing technical assistance on components of Women Entrepreneurship, which are not covered by other donors.

**Forward Focus**

The UN will continue to support the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship in the implementation of NAP for Women Entrepreneurship 2014-2020 focusing on the finalization of the ongoing activities.

Furthermore in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Water Administration and through outreach of the extension services, the UN will provide skills and knowledge to women groups on agro-processing and technology to help them move up the value chain. In addition, work will continue for the preparation of a dedicated subsidy scheme for women entrepreneurs engaged in agro-processing in rural areas. Overall a holistic approach will be followed in expanding economic empowering services (farming and non-farming) and complementing them with information provided at the local level. These efforts will be included in a national advocacy strategy with the purpose of promoting women's role in agriculture and changing negative behavioural attitudes.

**V. Financial Information**

The average delivery rate of Sida funding received during 2014 and 2015 stands at 67%. The graphs and tables below provide an overview of the Sida funding and delivery by output and UN Agencies.

Output 1.3 and 4.3 have received the highest Sida funding and have a delivery rate of 71% and 64% respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Outputs</th>
<th>2014 SIDA Funding ($)</th>
<th>2015 SIDA Funding ($)</th>
<th>Total Expendit. 2014-2015 ($)</th>
<th>Delivery Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1.3 - Eliminating violence in society</td>
<td>505,000</td>
<td>290,793</td>
<td>562,976</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3.1 - Parliament and Electoral Institutions</td>
<td>335,000</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>295,410</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3.2 - Mainstream gender and GRB</td>
<td>205,000</td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>255,471</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 4.3 - Economic Development</td>
<td>429,000</td>
<td>131,000</td>
<td>357,028</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total SIDA Allocations</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,474,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>714,793</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,470,885</strong></td>
<td><strong>67%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNDP and UN Women are the agencies receiving the highest funding and have a delivery rate of 80% and 58% respectively.